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S1

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The Blunt Wives Club — I've joined it

INSIDE TIMES2

Zut alors! Our children have turned out French

Defiant councils pledge to ignore new rules on single-sex spaces

Geraldine Scott Assistant Political Editor
Bill Curtis

Left-wing councils have launched a co-ordinated effort to defy rules on single-sex spaces, as some are refusing to make staff run services on the basis of biological sex.

Labour, Green and Liberal Democrat authorities said they would resist implementing the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) code, which came into force yesterday, as women pushed for legal action to force public bodies to comply with the law.

The leaders of six London boroughs — Lambeth, Hackney, Haringey, Lewisham, Southwark and Waltham Forest — made a commitment to keep their services "inclusive" and warned that the rules "will feel like an attack" on transgender and non-binary residents.

In a joint letter, they said: "Trans women are women, trans men are men, and non-binary identities are fundamentally valid." They described the code as "harmful to the rights of trans people" and said: "We won't put our staff in the impossible position of policing entry to public spaces." Hackney is understood to have already been served with a formal legal challenge over its alleged failure to provide female-only services, in what appears to be the first move against a public authority since the code came into force.

Lambeth councillors had previously backed a motion calling for the borough to refuse to implement the code. Islington said it was "contradictory, poorly developed and risks creating a climate of suspicion of trans people".

Bristol city council said services could admit people according to their gender identity, meaning trans women could be allowed into women's services. However, it said any service operating in that way must not be described as female-only and should instead be

Continued on page 2

GLEB GARANICH/REUTERS

Kyiv's missile defence plea A warehouse burns after a Russian missile strike on Kyiv. President Zelensky urged allies to send more Patriot interceptors after a massive ballistic attack on the capital left at least 17 dead Page 28

Plagiarism row professor resigns from Cambridge

Decision comes as university launches inquiry after fresh claims of dishonesty revealed by The Times

Emma Yeomans

A star Cambridge professor accused of plagiarism and dishonesty quit last night and said he no longer wished to live "under a constant spotlight".

Jason Arday, who was the youngest black professor in the university's history, resigned after it launched an investigation into him.

Cambridge has been under pressure for more than a week to launch an inquiry into Arday, who is accused of plagiarising his PhD thesis and has made extraordinary claims about his athletic feats and fundraising achievements. Last night the university said it would investigate his academic qualifications and honorary appointments, as well as research misconduct linked to his journal publications.

The announcement came after The Times submitted fresh evidence to the university suggesting that large parts of his research were fabricated and contained "impossible" evidence. Cambridge said there are "a number of ongoing complaints" about his academic research under investigation.

He is also accused of exaggerating his sporting and fundraising achievements, including claims that he ran 300 miles in three days, raised more than £5 million for charity and installed pumps for WaterAid.

Jason Arday receiving an honorary doctorate from St Mary's University, Twickenham, in 2024. He said he was quitting for the sake of his wellbeing

In a resignation letter published by the Good Law Project, which had previously launched a petition defending him, Arday said he no longer wished to live "under a constant spotlight" and was resigning for his wellbeing.

Arday, 41, pledged to return "stronger, wiser and with the same determination that has always defined my

Continued on page 4

Grooming gang abusers set for early prison release

Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Daisy Eastlake, Ollie Cole

Members of Asian gangs who sexually abused girls in northern England may be freed from prison early despite Andy Burnham's pledge to exclude grooming offences from the release scheme.

The Times has identified a number of cases of men who were convicted of assaulting children in Bradford. But because many of the offences took place before anti-grooming laws were introduced in 2003, they were charged with indecent assault, which does not fall within the exemptions to early release announced by the prime minister.

Last night Kemi Badenoch, the Conservative leader, wrote to Burnham to highlight the loophole, describing it as "yet another betrayal of victims".

She wrote: "On Tuesday you told the country that those convicted of grooming offences would be excluded. Your own government has now put in writing that some of these men will be released early anyway."

Among those who could be eligible for release having served just half of their sentence are five men who were sentenced to a collective 35 years in prison last October for abusing a Bradford girl from the age of 13. Mohammed Imran Akram, Safraz Ahmed Latif, Wajid Hussain, Mohammed Naheem and Nadeem Ali were each sentenced to between six and eight years in jail. Some of them could now be freed by the end of 2028. After the trial the victim said the men had taken away "my basic rights and stole my future".

The victims' commissioner told The Times that sufferers of abuse had been left "enduring weeks of stress and uncertainty" after the announcement of the new early-release scheme.

A Ministry of Justice spokesperson said: "We have been clear that we wanted to go further and block more offenders from getting out sooner into their sentence, but could not do so without risking prisons reaching capacity and collapsing."

Clamour to halt early release, page 6

News

Today's highlights

7am **Yvette Cooper**, the health secretary
8.10am **Claire Waxman**, the victims' commissioner for England and Wales
10.30am The actor **Neil Patrick Harris** and the director **George Jaques** on their new film, *Sunny Dancer*
1.45pm The music industry executive **Jamie Njoku-Goodwin**, right, on his plan to save the arts
3.45pm The film-maker **Will Darbyshire**

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TODAY'S EDITION

NEWS

TRUNK ROUTE
Swimmer's brain cancer plea grabs PM's attention
PAGE 10

SPORT

FREE SPIRIT
Roberto De Zerbi explains how he lifted Spurs
PAGES 62-63

TIMES2

SWEET HOME
Tired of going out? The joy of being a soft hermit
PAGE 4

LETTERS 24
LEADING ARTICLES 25
WORLD 26
BUSINESS 31
REGISTER 47
LAW 50
SPORT 56
CROSSWORD 64
TV & RADIO TIMES2

The man who revealed Infantino's calamitous World Cup plan

The Story

After breaking the story of a secret scheme to sell off the World Cup, Martyn Ziegler, chief sports reporter at The Times, unpacks the growing rebellion that threatens to end Gianni Infantino's presidency of Fifa

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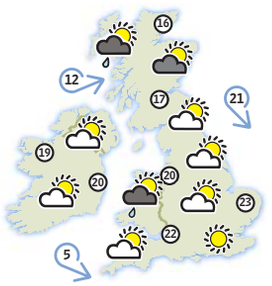

Dry for most with sunny spells. A few showers in northern and western areas. **Full forecast, page 55**

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'Unsustainable' student loans must be fixed, MPs tell Healey

Mary Downer

More than 120 MPs and peers have written to the chancellor to urge him to reform the student loans system to help millions of struggling graduates.

The letter, co-ordinated by the campaign group Rethink Repayment, has been signed by Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Green Party members. They say that the system, under which graduates have to repay 9 per cent of their income above a certain threshold, is an "unsustainable and unfair financial burden".

Lucy Powell, the education secretary, said last week that the issue was at the "top of my in-tray" after saying in February that she thought the interest rates charged on the loans were "egregious".

The government has been under pressure to reform student loans thanks to the Sunday Times End the Graduate Rip-Off campaign, which triggered a parliamentary inquiry.

The open letter has been sponsored by MPs from each main party, including the shadow education secretary Laura Trott. They are calling for the chancellor and the education secretary to meet them.

Oliver Gardner, the founder of Rethink Repayment, said: "The student loans crisis is no longer a partisan issue. When 121 parliamentarians from across the political spectrum come together on one issue like this, it shows how important it really is."

Signatories include the former education secretaries Sir Gavin Williamson and Kit Malthouse, and the former chief executive of Universities UK, Baroness Warwick of Undercliffe.

Jas Athwal, the Labour MP for Ilford South and a sponsor of the letter, said: "Student loans were sold as investments in young people's futures, but for millions of graduates, they have become a tax on aspiration."

David Reed, Conservative MP for Exmouth & Exeter East, said: "At a time when many graduates are already facing a high cost of living, a difficult jobs market and heavy tax burdens, adding what is, for all practical purposes, another 9 per cent charge on their earnings is simply wrong."

The average student debt for English students is £53,000. Depending on when a graduate went to university, loans have different interest rates and repayment thresholds, which were designed to increase with earnings so that payments remained affordable.

Plan 2 loans, which have come under the most scrutiny, have an interest rate set at the retail prices index rate of inflation plus up to 3 percentage points, depending on how much the graduate earns. These loans were taken out by students who started university between 2012 and 2023.

At last year's budget Rachel Reeves, then the chancellor, announced that the repayment threshold of £29,385 would be frozen for three years — the third freeze that Plan 2 graduates have faced. In April the government capped interest on Plan 2 loans at 6 per cent.

The parliamentary inquiry into student loans called for Reeves's threshold freeze to be reversed, to honour the terms when the loans were taken out. The inquiry also found that promotional materials for the loans, which were circulated by the Department for Education and Student Loans Company, would amount to mis-selling if they were from a regulated private company.

Munira Wilson, the Liberal Democrat MP for Twickenham, said: "No party has covered itself in glory on the topic of student loans, and the piecemeal changes to the system are seeing young people used as cash cows for other forms of public spending. It's time to work across parliament to build a student finance system that lets people get on with their lives."

No 10 denies plans for Epstein inquiry

Peter Chappell

Andy Burnham is not actively considering a public inquiry into the UK activities of the paedophile financier Jeffrey Epstein, despite a minister saying the government was "looking into" it.

Alex Davies-Jones, the victims minister, said that the prime minister had agreed to meet Epstein's victims, who she said had not been taken seriously by Sir Keir Starmer.

She told BBC *Newsnight* on Tuesday: "We are looking at this [an inquiry], we are reviewing what is possible. Again, same with Harrods survivors."

However, The Times has been told that Burnham is not considering a public inquiry.

The Ministry of Justice said: "Our thoughts are firmly with the victims of Jeffrey Epstein, who have survived devastating trauma. As [the minister] said, we are reviewing what is possible and will look at all options to support victims and survivors. The prime minister is committed to meeting with victims, but a public inquiry is not being actively considered."

Davies-Jones resigned from Starmer's government in May, accusing him of failing to listen to Epstein survivors over the decision to appoint Lord Mandelson as ambassador to Washington.

Asked what assurances she had received before returning to the role under Burnham, she said he "has assured me that he will meet them now he's prime minister and will work with us to look at systemic change across the system for all victims".

Jake Richards, a justice minister, had also indicated that an inquiry was possible. Speaking on LBC yesterday, he said Davies-Jones had "spoken to the prime minister and they're certainly considering and looking at all the options that are available".

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Councils ignore single-sex rules

labelled "single-gender" or "trans-inclusive".

The EHRC's code of practice was updated after the Supreme Court ruled last year the protected characteristic of sex in the Equality Act referred to biological sex.

Mary-Ann Stephenson, the EHRC chair, told Times Radio there was "potentially a degree of performativity" from councils who have spoken out against the code. She said: "Once they talk to the legal department, they will realise that they are obliged to follow the law."

Akua Reindorf, a barrister and former EHRC commissioner who worked on the code, added: "It's either performative or it's uninformed. The law is the law, the guidance is not the law; it just tells you how to comply."

Labour MPs including Nadia Whittome have backed a judicial review launched by the Good Law Project, which said the code amounted to a "blanket prohibition on trans-inclusive gendered services".

Baroness Falkner, the former EHRC chair, warned this week the law would "remain unenforced by the equalities regulator" because of its "meagre funding", leaving women to pursue cases themselves.

But Bethany Hutchison, the nurse who led a successful claim against Darlington Memorial Hospital over a trans colleague using single-sex changing rooms, said it was not right that women would be left to fight legal battles.

She said there must be "national leadership, clear direction and meaningful enforcement, rather than leaving ordinary women to uphold the law one costly case at a time".

Maya Forstater, chief executive of Sex Matters, added: "It's a disgrace that it should take the expense and personal cost of such legal action for women's rights to simply be upheld."

The code applies to all organisations providing services, exercising public functions or running associations — from councils and NHS trusts to universities, charities and businesses.

NHS England refused yesterday to set out a timetable for updating policies allowing trans patients to choose which ward they are treated on. The National Union of Students has produced guidance to help students "resist" the code.

Bash Back, the militant transgender activist network, told supporters not to comply with the guidance. The group said: "We must make them afraid of us."

The government said it was "committed to upholding single-sex spaces while also protecting the rights of trans people. There are clear laws in place to protect trans people from discrimination and harassment, which we continue to uphold."

Thousands of families lose free childcare

Aaliyah Ahmed

The number of children missing out on government-funded care because a parent earns more than £100,000 has more than quadrupled since 2018.

Parents of children aged from nine months to four can get up to 30 hours of government-funded childcare a week if they earn at least the minimum wage for 16 hours a week. Once one parent earns more than £100,000 a year, however, they lose all free childcare.

Between 50,500 and 99,000 children were affected by the £100,000 cliff edge in the last tax year, up from between 10,900 and 22,500 children in 2018-19.

The £100,000 threshold has not changed since it was introduced in 2017.

Ian Futcher, from the wealth manager Quilter, which obtained the figures through a freedom of information request, said: "While £100,000 is still a high income, it is not worth what it was when this threshold was set. More families are finding themselves caught by rules that were designed in a different economic environment."

The geese were social media stars at the £2,600-a-year club, where Emma Raducanu played before she won the US Open

Murder most fowl? Fury as tennis club's geese culled

Members loved the birds at St George's Hill but the chief executive said they had to be shot, writes **David Brown**

Members of one of Britain's most prestigious private tennis clubs are up in arms after a gaggle of geese were culled in secret because they kept making a mess on the courts.

The St George's Hill Lawn Tennis Club is in a gated estate that has been popular with celebrities and billionaires, leading to it being dubbed as the UK's Beverly Hills.

But the normally genteel atmosphere has been agitated after marksmen were hired to shoot the club's resident Canada geese.

Neighbours heard gunshots at 5.25am on July 16. They later discovered eight birds had been killed, including goslings. The cull raises wider issues about controlling Canada geese, whose numbers are soaring across the UK. Adult birds produce about 2lb (0.9 kg) of droppings a day.

St George's is an unlikely frontline in the battle against foreign invaders. The 16-acre club, which now has 3,700 members, was opened by Prince Alexander of Teck accompanied by his wife, Princess Alice, in 1913.

Annual fees are now £2,664, plus an entrance charge for new members of £2,000.

The club in Weybridge, Surrey, has 34 tennis courts, 13 of which are grass, and regularly hosts international tournaments. Emma Raducanu triumphed in the UK Pro Series and Classic Tournament a year before winning the 2021 US Open.

St George's has previously featured its resident Canada geese on its social media, which highlight its beautiful grounds and wildlife.

The club posted photographs of two adult and two young birds waddling in April last year on Instagram and Facebook with the caption: "We have baby goslings on our Lakeside Terrace!"

Rumours of the cull were swirling around the clubhouse before an official confirmation was emailed to members of the local residents' association.

An adult and a gosling that survived the cull were referred to in a social media post as having been "found in a distressed state the same day wandering the local area".

The post continued: "The tennis club claim they were pests and murdered them by the club's lake which they used as their home much to the delight of the young and old club members. Such barbaric action in a situation where local wildlife organisations would have taken them in."

Club members asked for anonymity when discussing the controversy.

"The members have always liked the geese," said one long-standing member. "It is sometimes a bit annoying because they amble on to the courts and leave their poo.

"But that does not mean they had to be shot. It's a private estate and the residents are concerned about a firearm being brought in without any warning."

Another player said: "The club management ordered this because they felt the birds were making the courts messy. There was no consultation with the members. The club is in a beautiful setting and the birds were part of that."

Some members claim they were initially assured the birds had simply been relocated two miles away to the lakes at the Claremont Landscape Garden.

Another member said: "The Canada geese were adored and loved. They walked around the club at their own pace and sometimes held up the traffic, but nobody minded.

"First we were told they had been rehomed and then that they had 'flown off'. The members and local residents are furious."

The shooting was carried out by a contractor with a licence from Natural England to cull some species of birds, including Canada geese, to preserve public health or safety. Surrey police were informed before the cull.

Miles Hill, the club's chief executive, said in a statement: "We fully understand that some members and estate residents have been upset by what occurred. This was not a decision the club wished to take, nor one that was taken lightly. It followed many months of attempting to manage a growing resident population of Canada geese through enhanced cleaning and non-lethal measures."

Hill said the club concluded that it was appropriate to restrict advance knowledge of the cull so it could be carried out safely and effectively.

Canada geese are believed to have been introduced to the UK when King Charles II received the birds as a gift from a Russian ambassador in 1664. They were installed in St James's Park, central London.

The British Trust for Ornithology says numbers of the birds in the UK have more than doubled since 1984. The current UK population is about 160,000.

Allergic scientist creates a gene-edited dog he can bring home

Rhys Blakely Science Editor

Matt Walker loved dogs. The trouble was that being around them made him sneeze.

Stroking one would make his eyes itch and bring his skin out in a nasty rash. For years, his allergies stopped him from having a dog of his own until Walker, who happens to have a PhD in genetics, set about creating a canine companion he could live with.

The result is Bailey, a beagle whose DNA has been edited. In simple terms, Walker and his colleagues switched off a gene that produces a protein known as "Can f 1". Found in hair, skin cells and saliva, it is often responsible for allergic reactions to dogs.

According to Walker, the experiment worked. In a paper published in The Crispr Journal, he and his colleagues said they had shown that "precise genetic modification in dogs can reduce allergenicity'. In plainer English, that means Bailey does not make him sneeze. "The feeling is sort of a mix of relief and awe and gratitude that it worked," Walker said. "It feels just amazing to get to have a dog."

Walker's company, Kindred Companion Sciences, created Bailey and her twin, Alfie, using Crispr, a widely used gene-editing technique. The scientists began with beagle skin cells. They edited the DNA inside them to disable the gene that produces Can f 1, then transferred the altered genetic material into eggs. These were implanted in a surrogate beagle, which gave birth to two female puppies in September 2024.

Tests found no detectable Can f 1 in the puppies' saliva or in their hair and dander. By contrast, the protein was present in samples from an ordinary beagle, a poodle and a goldendoodle — a crossbreed often marketed as "hypoallergenic".

In a skin-prick test, Walker reacted to samples taken from the ordinary dogs, but not to those from Bailey and Alfie.

Bailey and Alfie have both turned two and so far have had no health issues

The test was limited to just one person, however, and dog allergies can be caused by other proteins besides Can f 1.

Bailey and Alfie have so far developed normally, and the scientists found no obvious unintended genetic changes. However, the animals' health will need to be monitored for much longer to be sure the process is safe.

Bailey lives with Walker in New York, while Alfie lives in Florida with another Kindred Companion scientist.

It is likely to be several years before gene-edited pets are available to buy. Larger trials will be needed to establish whether the approach works for a broader range of allergy sufferers.

News

Star professor's research was full of claims that simply didn't add up

Academic papers by the former Cambridge professor are littered with inconsistencies, **Emma Yeomans** writes

JOSHUA BRATT FOR THE TIMES

Jason Arday said that one paper was supported by Mind, but the charity said it had no record of funding the research

Professor Jason Arday's academic research contains "impossible" evidence and is littered with inconsistencies, a Times analysis of his work has found.

An audit of five years of study conducted by the former University of Cambridge scholar, the youngest black professor in the institution's history, suggests large parts could be fabricated.

The findings include false funding declarations; participant quotes that appear to have been taken from another researcher's own analysis; and "impossible" samples, such as a breakdown of his participants' genders, which adds up to 110 per cent.

Arday has come under increasing scrutiny after allegations that he plagiarised his PhD thesis and parts of his published academic research.

He denies plagiarism and was cleared by investigators at Liverpool John Moores University where he completed his doctorate.

Six academics said the new findings unearthed by The Times could indicate fabrication of his research. A further two have separately and publicly accused him of fabrication in his studies.

Arday has previously denied fabricating any of his research. He told The Times last week: "It's more likely that I've made a mistake, there's a clerical error. It's not that I've fabricated."

FAMILIAR QUOTES

"My understanding of English is improving daily," a Latin-American academic is quoted as saying in one of Arday's papers. "Sometimes I struggle to articulate clearly and accurately what I would like to say to the healthcare professionals provided at university." Three years earlier, he had attributed the quote to an Asian female undergraduate student. It is one of numerous issues with his papers.

In a section of his 2021 paper under the heading "Funding", Arday wrote: "This research was supported by Mind." But Mind said it had "no record of any research we funded or commissioned relating to this".

The Times also understands that Arday has not applied for ethical approval for published studies, despite working with human participants to discuss sensitive topics of race and mental health.

Giving a webinar in July 2020 about the paper prior to its publication, Arday referred to a participant who took their own life and read out their quote detailing the "violence of these racialised cultures" in the academic world. Although the published paper used near-identical quotes attributed to a male, mixed-heritage academic, there was no reference to this person taking their own life.

Arday told The Times that it was normal to be "selective" and impossible to use every detail. He said: "I have no reason to fabricate or to exaggerate black people's suffering in academia."

The 2021 paper was Arday's second piece of research into mental health and race at universities, after a 2018 paper that he was forced to retract and republish with corrections.

The new analysis has identified more quotes in his 2018 paper that appear to have been plagiarised from a study by the renowned epidemiologist Anjum Memon and his team, which Arday now claims come from his own participants. While some had been identified, The Times has seen evidence that far more quotes are textually or structurally traceable to Memon's work.

Passing off another academic's research as if it comes from one's own interviews would amount to fabricating his data, experts said. Andrew Gelman, a professor of statistics and political science at Columbia University in New York, said: "I can't think of any alternative explanations."

'IMPOSSIBLE' PARTICIPANTS

Arday's research relies on interviews with samples of black and minority ethnic students and university staff discussing their experiences of race and mental health. In one paper, "Attempting to break the chain: reimaging inclusive pedagogy and decolonising the curriculum within the academy", he says he interviewed a sample of 17 participants. But a breakdown of their races, genders and jobs adds up to 18.

Further oddities appear: he quotes four distinct academics, but says he only interviewed three; quotes five mixed-heritage participants, but interviewed only four; and attributes a quote to participant No 21, in a study that only interviewed 17 or 18 people. Similar issues appear in five studies. Professor Robert Dingwall, a professor of sociology at the University of Nottingham, said there could be "legitimate privacy reasons" for blurring participant numbers. He added: "However, this decision should always be declared and justified. It does not seem relevant ... here."

CALLS FOR AN INVESTIGATION

The University of Cambridge has previously said any inquiries must be carried out "by the institution at which the research was carried out", and that it had passed information to the relevant institutions. Last night it said it that had begun an investigation following new information about Professor Arday's academic qualifications and honorary appointments. "To ensure a fair process, we will not comment further until this has concluded. Separately, there remains a number of ongoing complaints regarding academic misconduct, which are being handled in line with our Misconduct in Research policy," it added.

The University of Durham, which employed Arday when he published the 2021 paper, said: "We have looked into this, and there are no records that the research discussed at the July 2020 webinar or the subsequent paper accepted in September 2020, fell under our institutional ethical oversight."

The journal Higher Education, which published his 2021 paper, investigated the ethical approval of the study but concluded that at the time he had submitted, ethical approval was not a condition of publication so there was no breach of their rules.

Liverpool John Moores University said in 2025 it received allegations of academic misconduct against Arday. "A confidential procedure was conducted in response to those allegations and Professor Arday's PhD still stands."

Arday did not respond to requests to comment on the new findings.

How Arday's story unravelled

July 21 Nathan Cofnas, a former researcher at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, makes claims of plagiarism against Arday.
July 24 Analysis of Arday's 2015 thesis by The Times confirms multiple examples of identical or near-identical passages to the doctoral thesis of Paula Zwozdiak-Myers, a Brunel University student, published six years earlier.
July 24 David Harris, emeritus professor at Plymouth Marjon University, claims that he alerted Cambridge and Liverpool John Moores universities to his concerns about plagiarism in 2023.
July 28 A "solidarity letter" published by the Good Law Project backing Arday receives hundreds of signatures, including from Zack Polanski, the Green Party leader.
July 31 Arday, in an interview with The Times, denies academic fraud.
August 2 Arday faces scrutiny over his claims that police investigated a pig's head sent to his parents. The Met tells The Times it could find "no record" of the claim.
August 3 The president of a Cambridge college withdraws her support for Arday. WaterAid casts doubt on claims Arday made about "installing water points" in South America and west Africa.
August 4 It emerges that the Met spent four months investigating Jack Grove, a journalist who emailed questions to Arday. Glasgow University denies that he held a visiting professor title and Cambridge removes one of his qualifications from its website.
Yesterday Hours after Cambridge opens an investigation into the allegations, Arday quits.

'Relentless accusations have taken toll on me and those I love'

Continued from page 1

journey", and asked his supporters for "the space to begin again". He said: "This is not the end of my work. It is simply the end of this chapter."

Arday did not respond to any of the allegations of plagiarism or misconduct, nor address any of the other claims he is said to have made. He said: "This decision should not be interpreted as a loss of faith in scholarship or in the values that first brought me to Cambridge. Nor should it be mistaken for an acceptance of the narratives that have surrounded me. It is simply the decision of someone who has reached the limits of what any person should reasonably be expected to endure ... The relentless accusations, speculation and public commentary have taken a profound toll on me and on those I love."

It also emerged yesterday that Arday had falsely claimed to have published a book; it had been abandoned by publishers. A statement posted to Cambridge's website said: "The University of Cambridge has begun an investigation following new information about Professor Arday's academic qualifications and honorary appointments. Separately, there remains a number of ongoing complaints regarding academic misconduct, which are being handled in line with our misconduct in research policy."

Jesus College, Cambridge, where Arday is a fellow, also launched an inquiry.

Affair is an own goal for Cambridge, Roger Mosey, page 22
Resignation leaves questions for university, leading article, page 25

Four stabbed in Covent Garden

Jessica Sharkey Crime Correspondent
Seren Hughes, Hamish McCorriston Louis Sykes

A woman has been arrested after four people were stabbed in Covent Garden in central London yesterday afternoon.

Four men, aged 34, 39, 42 and 52, were wounded in the incident on Endell Street, near the Shaftesbury Theatre, at about 12.30pm. The Metropolitan Police said two men sustained injuries that were not believed to be life-threatening or life-changing and the other two victims had been discharged from hospital.

"While at an early stage of the investigation, this is believed to be a mental health-related incident. Officers seized a pair of scissors at the scene," a Met spokesperson said.

A 47-year-old woman was arrested on suspicion of possession of an offensive weapon and assault. She was taken into custody. A witness told The Times that the alleged attacks unfolded outside the theatre before the woman made her way down Endell Street.

Arjan Gjorga, 48, the co-owner of a fish and chip shop on Endell Street, said the alleged attacker was a homeless woman he had seen "a hundred times" in the area. He said the woman allegedly "started stabbing random people", adding: "We saw this lady after a few minutes being arrested. The police responded immediately."

An employee at 2 Chairs Grooming Room, a barber shop, said one of the alleged victims ran into the shop to call the police. The employee said "there was a lot of blood on [the victim]", but that he was not badly hurt.

Sarah Calcraft, who works at Pop Boutique, helped two of the men and gave one a T-shirt from her store. "They were both calm and relaxed. Both had very minor injuries, but still scary injuries nonetheless," she said. "One of them was bleeding from his back and the other had a really small wound. There were lots of tourists around Covent Garden. You wouldn't really anticipate the sort of thing happening, so it was quite a shocking little affair."

Matt Bishop, 42, who works at a consultancy firm in Covent Garden, claimed that the woman had a "standoff" with three police officers.

"What she was shouting was pretty incoherent. The police officer was asking what language she was shouting," he added.

Another worker, who did not wish to be named, claimed the police surrounded the woman, who appeared to be holding "large gardening scissors".

Police with Tasers confronted a woman after four men were stabbed in Covent Garden yesterday. One person was arrested on suspicion of assault and possession of an offensive weapon after allegedly attacking people at random

Footage of the aftermath of the incident appeared to show two police officers pointing Tasers in the direction of a woman. They were seen tackling her to the ground and she appeared to use her vape as she was restrained.

A large police cordon was put up from High Holborn to the St Mungo's homeless centre on Endell Street, where officers were speaking to people before they entered the building.

St Mungo's, a homeless charity which works in the area, said: "Our thoughts are with everyone who has been affected by this distressing incident. We are working closely with emergency services to ensure that all of the people we support, in addition to our colleagues, are safe and accounted for."

Chief Superintendent Jason Stewart of the Met, who leads policing in the area, said: "Officers responded within minutes of this incident after receiving a number of reports.

"While still at an early stage of the investigation, we would like to reassure the community that we currently believe this to be an isolated, mental health-related incident."

London Ambulance Service said: "We were called at 12.29pm today to reports of a stabbing on Endell Street, WC2H.

"We sent an ambulance crew, a paramedic in a fast-response car and an incident response officer. We also dispatched London's air ambulance. We treated four patients at the scene and took them all to a major trauma centre as a priority by road."

Father charged with murder of girl, 9

Marc Horne

The father of a nine-year-old girl who died after being found seriously injured on an industrial estate has appeared in court charged with her murder.

Minnie Merriman, from West Yorkshire, was discovered just after midnight on Monday at Elliot industrial estate in Arbroath, Angus, where her family had been camping. She was taken to Ninewells Hospital in Dundee, where she died.

Christopher Rice, 35, from Wakefield, appeared at Forfar sheriff court yesterday charged with her murder. He did not enter a plea and was remanded in custody. He will appear in court again within the next eight days.

Minnie's family paid tribute to her in a statement released through Police Scotland. "We are devastated with the loss of our beloved, absolutely incredible, beautiful and brave Minnie Moo. Our family asks that our privacy is respected at this extremely difficult time," they said.

Minnie Merriman, from West Yorkshire, is believed to have been camping with her family in Arbroath

The family are being supported by specialist officers. West Yorkshire police are assisting Police Scotland in the investigation. Detective Inspector Mike Ness, from Police Scotland's major investigation team, said: "Our thoughts remain with everyone affected by these events, especially Minnie's family. A police presence will remain in the area while our inquiries continue."

Karen Youngson, an Arbroath resident, said that she had picked up her friend from the gym on the industrial estate at about 10pm on Sunday and had seen a small tent and some camping chairs. When I first went up there, I was like, my goodness, why is there a tent there?" she told the BBC. "There were two camping chairs, that's all I saw, but it was the amount of rubbish that I noticed, it was unbelievable."

When she returned from collecting her friend, she said the tent was dark and silent.

Gary Glitter in court over historical abuse allegations

Jessica Sharkey, Hamish McCorriston

Gary Glitter has appeared in court charged with historical sexual offences dating back to 1978.

The former singer, whose real name is Paul Gadd, is charged with unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under the age of 13 and three counts of indecent assault on a girl under the age of 14.

The alleged offences relate to one child and allegedly took place at the defendant's property in London between 1978 and 1981. He is accused of giving the girl chocolate and inviting her to his house where he "then committed a number of serious sexual offences".

Jonathan Polnay KC, for the prosecution, told Westminster magistrates' court yesterday that this continued over a period of about two years.

Glitter, 82, appeared at Westminster magistrates' court via videolink, wearing a cap and a blue shirt, and confirmed his personal details.

At the hearing, the defendant complained of hearing issues. After being asked to confirm his name, Glitter said: "Your honour, excuse me, I'm extremely deaf and unless I'm lip-reading I can't hear. My name is Paul Gadd."

An investigation was launched after allegations were reported to the Metropolitan Police in January last year. The police interviewed Glitter six months later. Judge Paul Goldspring remanded Glitter into custody and he will next appear at the Old Bailey next month.

Chief constable joins clamour to halt early release

Oliver Wright Policy Editor
Daisy Eastlake, Ollie Cole

Thames Valley Police is weighing up whether to join legal action to block the release of two men who killed PC Andrew Harper, saying that opposition to the decision was "overwhelming".

Jason Hogg, the chief constable, said he was in talks with the Police Federation, which represents rank-and-file officers, about challenging the early release in the courts.

He described the decision to release Harper's killers early as "perverse", adding that bringing the decision to judicial review was "certainly something I would consider".

Harper, who served with Thames Valley, was killed in 2019 when he was dragged by a car down a country road in Berkshire by three teenagers fleeing the scene of a quad bike theft. The two passengers in the car, Jessie Cole and Albert Bowers, were sentenced in 2020 to 13 years for manslaughter and could apply for early release after serving half of their sentences.

After a campaign by Harper's widow, Lissie, parliament passed "Harper's Law", which gives mandatory life sentences to the killers of emergency services workers. It also doubles the maximum penalty from 12 months to two years for those who assault police or other emergency workers.

However, the new rules — introduced in 2022 — did not apply retrospectively to the sentencing of Harper's killers, and so do not prevent them from being released early.

Hogg told the BBC: "The law isn't retrospective and we all understand that, but the fact that they are released early simply seems perverse."

Andy Burnham announced a rapid review of the previous Labour government's early release scheme when he became prime minister. On Tuesday he announced that he was scaling back the programme and excluding anyone who had been found guilty of "rape, serious child sex and other grooming offences".

Mohammed Imran Akram, left, and Mohammed Naheem, jailed for sex crimes in October, could be freed early

However, the announcement has unravelled as it emerged that historical child abusers who committed their offences before 2003 would not be covered by the exemption. Among those affected are Vicki Crawford, who was a victim of sex offences when she was 14 in the 1980s. Her attacker was jailed for seven years in 2024.

However, because of when the offences took place, he was found guilty of indecent assault — the crime at the time — rather than sexual activity with a child, which was only brought in as a law just over two decades ago.

This same principle applies to some of those who have been convicted as part of long-running historical investigations into Asian grooming gangs.

While most of those involved have been convicted of rape, which is covered by the exemption, others were convicted of indecent assault, which covers everything other than penetrative sex and was not included in the list.

Kemi Badenoch, the Tory leader, has written to Burnham pointing out the loophole and calling for a rethink.

"I'm not arguing against early release," she told the BBC. "I'm against early release of this dangerous category of rapists, paedophiles, killers, including the killers of PC Andrew Harper."

Jake Richards, the justice minister, said the killers would remain subject to the early release scheme from October as he faced broadcasters yesterday. "It would be wrong to pick out individual cases within different offending cohorts," he said. "That wouldn't be right. It wouldn't be lawful either. I understand the strength of feeling from police officers ... [but] if we do not have prison places available then the police, the good work that they do every day on the streets, finding perpetrators, locking them up, it would be impossible."

The victims' commissioner, Claire Waxman, said that victims had been left "enduring weeks of stress and uncertainty" because of the early release scheme as she called for "greater clarity and timely communication" from Burnham's government.

Communication with victims on the changes is expected to go through victim liaison officers, but this process could take some time, leaving victims unclear on whether the crimes committed against them are included in the new early release plans.

The Ministry of Justice uploaded a list of offences covered by the release programme to its website on Tuesday evening but Waxman is concerned that the list is complex and could be hard to navigate for victims.

She told The Times: "People are only receiving information, as far as we're aware anyway, from the media at the moment. Above all, the priority now must be delivering clarity to victims, whichever side of the exclusions they fall, and timely communication and sufficient time for safety planning."

She has called for a ministerial-led national taskforce to oversee implementation of the reforms, improve coordination between agencies and provide greater transparency on how it is being delivered, with concerns that prison and probation services are facing "huge pressures".

The chief inspector of probation, Martin Jones, has warned that the electronic tagging system is failing to alert the authorities to potential breaches of conditions. There is also a 1,500 shortfall of probation officers, and the trade union representing probation staff is balloting members on industrial action.

Haigh will not grace Admiralty residence

Andy Burnham's de facto deputy prime minister, Louise Haigh, has declined the offer of a grace-and-favour residence (Aubrey Allegretti writes).

Haigh, the first secretary of state and most senior minister in the Cabinet Office, turned down the chance of extra taxpayer-funded accommodation. Allies said she

I know the devastating cost of letting unrepentant killers go free

Arlene Foster
Comment

Before the House of Lords went into recess for the summer, we had an opportunity to ask about the government's early release scheme benefiting prisoners such as the killers of PC Andrew Harper. Many of us had remained in the chamber to express our concern that such an action would take place.

From my perspective, as the daughter of a police officer who was the subject of an attempted murder by the IRA and the wife of a now-retired police officer, I urged the government to learn the lessons of the early release scheme that was inserted into the Belfast agreement at the last minute by Sinn Fein.

The government has now indicated that although it will not release those who have been convicted of rape or serious sexual offences, and rightly so, it will go ahead with the release of those guilty of killing PC Harper.

Understandably, his widow called the decision to proceed with the release of his killers an "affront to justice" and I completely agree. The reason given by the prime minister as to why he was proceeding was that "he had pushed the very limits of what is possible" but could not exempt more prisoners without the prison system falling apart.

I find all this totally bizarre. We are allowing some of the most violent killers out of prison after serving half their sentence to make space for prisoners who may not be anywhere near as violent. Surely the answer is to create more prison spaces in short order — we were able to create Nightingale hospitals when Covid struck — and in the longer term we need to assess why we have more criminals and prisoners than the system can cope with.

The answer to a lack of prison spaces is not to allow violent offenders to walk free. The reason I referenced the prisoner release scheme in Northern Ireland is that scheme has had a devastating effect on victims and their families, who still see the early release of IRA murderers as a betrayal. It has also had a long-term impact on faith in the justice system. I asked the government to not just think of prison spaces in terms of numbers but to think of the impact the early release of police killers would have on the wider justice system and the future recruitment of police officers.

Tony Blair, the prime minister at the time of the Belfast agreement, in words reminiscent of the current prime minister, said the early release of prisoners was "horrible but necessary". That is such a poor justification for a policy that still today is causing problems in Northern Ireland and across the UK — as many young soldiers from Britain were murdered by IRA terrorists who were then released. Meanwhile the government still pursues veterans who served in Northern Ireland.

Andrew Harper's widow is bereft. Like so many IRA terrorists, his killers showed no remorse, yet they will walk free from prison as she and the rest of his family live with the void that his killing has left.

Police officers go out every day to protect the rest of society from thugs like those who killed Andrew Harper. It is beyond appalling that the government is prepared to allow these killers to be freed. Promises that victims will have access to better support and the reassurance that offenders will face tighter supervision will ring hollow, especially to those of us who have seen it all before.

Baroness Foster of Aghadrumsee is a former first minister of Northern Ireland and leader of the Democratic Unionist Party

LEE THOMAS; THOMAS IMO/PHOTOTHEK/GETTY IMAGES

Louise Haigh has turned down an apartment in the grade I listed Admiralty House, which is attached to the Old Admiralty Building on Horse Guards Parade, while Ed Miliband accepted the exclusive use of Chevening, below

Badenoch rejects coalition with 'woke' Reform

Patrick Maguire
Chief Political Commentator

Kemi Badenoch, the Conservative leader, has said she will never form a coalition with Reform because she could not trust Robert Jenrick and Suella Braverman, and denounced Nigel Farage as the leader of a "woke" party.

Badenoch said a hung parliament after the next general election was a "probable" scenario but emphatically ruled out any agreement with Reform and accused her challengers on the right of a "victim mentality".

The leader of the opposition told the *Political Currency* podcast that she had no interest in heeding calls to "unite the right" despite repeated calls for an electoral pact, adding: "I'm not trying to unite the right, I'm trying to unite the country." Speaking to Ed Balls, the former Labour cabinet minister, Badenoch stressed she was unwilling to work with Reform or its leader. "I want people to know that I'm not doing any deals with Nigel Farage ... pre-election, I don't even see how we could do any kind of deal post-election."

She declined, however, to reveal her strategy for dealing with the "challenging" scenario "where really nobody has won" the election.

Accusing advocates of a deal between the two parties of seeking self-advancement, she said: "Even deals post-elections are stitch-ups. So I just say no to everything, and the reason why is because people who talk about deals are usually not thinking about the public — they're just thinking about how they can get jobs themselves."

Badenoch went on to say that the presence of her former cabinet colleagues Robert Jenrick and Suella Braverman in Reform's leadership team made any suggestion of co-operation a "non-starter". Agreeing with Balls that she "couldn't trust them an inch", Badenoch said the two defectors had "spent their time trying to destroy and undermine the Conservative Party, first from inside and then by leaving".

Asked to name the biggest difference between the Tories and Reform, Badenoch said: "Reform are a woke party. A lot of people don't understand, you know, the word 'woke' is used to mean many things." She said the word was not necessarily a "left-wing thing" and accused Reform of "demonising" large sections of the population.

"When I talk about woke, I talk about people who [think] it's all grievance. It's victim narratives. People are doing this to us. Oppressor narratives ... On the left, it's, you know, whites are the oppressors, or men are the oppressors." She said Farage had cast the "establishment" as the "oppressors", saying: "It's all moaning and whinging and not proper solutions. It's about power dynamics and how to get power, not actually solutions and how to fix things.

"There's a huge victim mentality. I'm not a victim, and I will never ever play the victim, even when I probably have grounds to do so."

She added: "What I'm not going to do is demonise certain groups, whether it's billionaires or immigrants or the wealthy, or NHS workers, or the public sector — we're not doing that. We're not setting groups against each other, and Reform does that."

Senior Reform sources derided the Tory leader's claims, telling The Times: "This is quite rich from a woman who will rant and rave at any and every editor who dares publish the slightest bit of criticism about her. Kemi is a thin-skinned professional loser — there's a reason she is the most unsuccessful Tory leader of the opposition in history."

Badenoch also sought to dispel criticism of her opposition to net zero, telling Balls: "I think a lot of people think I don't care about the environment. That's not my critique of net zero. It's that these plans are not working and we're spending a lot of money on them. ... Businesses are closing, and yet we're making climate change worse.

"We need to do more on the natural, on the nature side of things: biodiversity, habitat. What are we doing on flood defences? What exactly are we funding to make sure that we can keep our environment as sane as possible?"

Asked whether she thought Andy Burnham's first moves as prime minister were "smart", Badenoch said: "Who, Andy? Nah, I don't think so."

The Tory leader did, however, pay heartfelt tribute to Sir Keir Starmer — suggesting the scale of public "loathing" for the last prime minister became "excessive" and describing the arson attack on his former family home last year as "absolutely horrific".

wanted to spend her time away from Westminster focusing on supporting "No 10 North", closer to her Sheffield Heeley constituency.

Ed Miliband, the foreign secretary, has gained exclusive use of Chevening, a Palladian mansion in 3,000 acres near Sevenoaks, Kent. It is the building most sought-after by ministers. John Healey, the chancellor, is also expected to inherit Dorneywood, a retreat in Buckinghamshire, from Rachel Reeves. Burnham plans to use Chequers occasionally but has not been to the Elizabethan manor since he became prime minister.

As his effective deputy and co-ordinator of the new Office of the Prime Minister, Haigh was offered a government residence but declined. A senior Labour source said: "Any spare time Louise has away from Westminster is going into making No 10 North a success."

As deputy prime minister, Angela Rayner used a three-bedroom apartment in the grade I listed Admiralty House. She is understood not to have asked for use of an official government residence on her return as housing secretary.

The new occupant of Admiralty House will be Wes Streeting, the defence secretary, due to the fact his house in Ilford, east London, is outside the urgent response time.

Former neo-Nazi who harassed MP aborts Tory election bid

Geraldine Scott

A former neo-Nazi who carried out a campaign of antisemitic abuse against a Jewish MP has stood down as a Conservative council candidate.

Joshua Bonehill-Paine was chosen to contest the Crewkerne South ward of Somerset council in May but said yesterday afternoon that he needed to do more work to "help destroy antisemitism and rebuild trust" before standing for public office.

Bonehill-Paine, 33, was jailed in 2016 after being convicted of racially aggravated harassment against Luciana Berger, who was then the Labour MP for Liverpool Wavertree and now sits in the House of Lords. He published a series of blog posts about Berger, describing her as "an evil money-grabber" with a "deep-rooted hatred of men". In another post he claimed the number of Jewish Labour MPs was a "problem".

Berger said yesterday that Bonehill-Paine had been "smirking throughout" his trial and the judge found he had "showed utter contempt ... And it was during the court case that he thought it appropriate to do a Nazi salute in the Old Bailey in the direction of his supporters ... in the gallery."

He had previously been imprisoned for producing an advert featuring an image of Auschwitz that promised "an absolute gas" at a rally in Golders Green, north London.

Kemi Badenoch, the Tory leader, had defended him and said there was a difference between allowing him to seek local office and giving him "a national platform" as a prospective MP.

She said: "He is standing to be a councillor in Somerset. It is a local platform looking at parking, sorting out bins. That's what councillors do. It's not a national platform. I have much higher thresholds for what it takes to be a Conservative MP. This man is not standing to be an MP. There's a huge difference."

Announcing his withdrawal, Bonehill-Paine said: "The last 24 hours have shown that a lot of people do not understand how terrible I feel about the things I did when I was much younger. I know that my previous actions continue to cause pain in the Jewish community. I had thought that getting involved in my local council and working hard for my community was a good way to show how much I have changed."

He has accepted an offer to become an adviser to the Conservative Party's culture and integration commission, "specifically focusing on how young men become radicalised". Badenoch said she was "sad" Bonehill-Paine had withdrawn but "glad he is going to work with me and the party on tackling radicalisation". She said: "I see this man as somebody who has been rehabilitated."

Joshua Bonehill-Paine said he had been rehabilitated after being jailed in 2016

His crimes can't be shrugged away, Janice Turner, page 22

DJ Polanski finally adds climate crisis to his playlist

Tom Peck
Political Sketch

Last week, The Times caught up with Zack Polanski at a Green Party rave in Bristol. In a short peroration delivered from the DJ booth, the party leader hyped up his crowd on all manner of subjects, from rent control to the toppling of the statue of the slave trader Edward Colston to the genocide in Gaza and the terrorist attack at Pride Berlin. At the time, France and Spain were on fire, but with so much else to discuss, the de facto leader of the UK's climate protection movement just couldn't squeeze it in.

My esteemed colleague Lucy Bannerman also wrote of encountering a 77-year-old man in a straw hat who, out of concern for the planet, had recently joined the Green Party and described himself as "disappointed" to find the topic somehow hadn't come up.

So we can only hope both he and his straw hat found their way to Westminster yesterday, where Polanski was doing something highly unusual. No, not paying his council tax, but giving a speech on climate change. It's arguable that this, Polanski's big speech on the climate crisis, might have come a touch sooner rather than fully eleven weeks after the first record-shattering heatwave of the year.

But Polanski, right, chose a fine day for it. A few weeks ago, the London School of Economics had to cancel a panel event called "Extreme Heat" owing to what it also described as "extreme heat". There was no chance of that this time. According to AccuWeather, the conditions around the venue were "25, feels like 22". Polanski, who has recently moved from his houseboat and into some sort of flatshare in Hackney, may relate, though his numbers are more "43, acts like 19".

He'd come with a list of demands. "There needs to be a free, accessible 'cool space' in every local area," he said. He didn't overtly explain what a free, accessible cool space was, so we do have to brace ourselves for the possibility he means more Green raves.

His next one? "We need financial support for households so they can heatproof their homes." This was an idea a bright young chancellor called Rishi Sunak had six years and five prime ministers ago. It was called the green homes grant and would be in with a strong shout for the most woeful and most pointless government initiative quite possibly of all time. If Polanski is serious about doing this properly, then the very best of luck to him. It's crucial, but it's very, very expensive.

"We need a robust wildfire prevention service," he said. "A fire service that includes firefighting helicopters when needed, and not needing a charity to contract a private firm to fight fires." This was a reference to the situation in Suffolk last week, in which the National Trust paid for a helicopter to join the forces trying to control the wildfire that took hold around its coastguard cottages at Dunwich Heath.

So how's all this going to be done? Well, that part is easy. "We will tax the fossil fuel firms, who are fuelling these infernos," he said. Well, it's easy to say. In reality, it's quite hard, given there's virtually no one in the UK whose pension is not in some way linked to the profits of fossil fuel firms. And, at least for the time being, nothing in the western world brings down governments faster than rising fuel prices.

He had another big idea too. "We need to bring water back into public hands," he said. His diagnosis of this country's outrageous privatised water supply was entirely correct. Money that should have been spent investing in infrastructure has instead been paid out to shareholders. Billions have vanished and the system has all but fallen apart. But you can't get the billions back, so all you can do is ask the public, who've already paid out in the form of exorbitant bills, to pay up again.

"Let me speak directly to the prime minister," he said. "If we are to secure a liveable future for our children and grandchildren, there can be no new drilling for oil and gas. On this, the science is crystal clear."

On this, the science is not crystal clear. What's crystal clear is that human beings, everywhere on Earth, need to dramatically reduce their carbon emissions. How we best manage that transition is very much a matter of debate.

In the questions at the end, Polanski denied he hadn't said very much about the environment since becoming Green Party leader, which is not the sort of denial you'd expect someone in his position to have to make. Still, it was a welcome intervention. People care about the environment, and they expect the Green Party to care the most. If they don't then they've no right to be surprised when their supporters find themselves abiding by one of life's wisest lessons. If you're wandering around a rave in a straw hat with no idea what's going on, it might be a good idea to go home.

BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

The talks between the foreign secretary and Marco Rubio, his US counterpart, were described as warm and productive

Spend more on defence, Miliband told

George Grylls Washington

Ed Miliband was told that Britain must increase defence spending during talks with Marco Rubio on his first visit to Washington as foreign secretary.

Rubio, the US secretary of state, said Europe needed to "take a greater role in its own security".

It comes after Andy Burnham refused to commit to spending 3 per cent of GDP on defence by 2030, suggesting instead the UK might meet a longer-term target of raising core defence spending to 3.5 per cent by 2035.

Upon resigning as defence secretary this year, John Healey, the chancellor, said he was "certain" the UK should hit 3 per cent by 2030. Germany has overtaken the UK as the largest defence spender in Europe.

Miliband is regarded with scepticism by some in the Trump administration because of his opposition to North Sea drilling. Allies of the president including Chris Wright, the energy secretary, used the nickname "Ed Miliwatt" to satirise the foreign secretary's embrace of green energy projects, the Times revealed this week.

Miliband is a longstanding critic of President Trump, calling him a "racist" and a "misogynist", and saying he had a "peculiar" relationship with Russia and "authoritarian tendencies".

Confronted with those comments before the talks, Miliband ignored reporters' questions and said: "We are looking forward to our meeting."

After the meeting, Rubio said they discussed "the need for Europe to take a greater role in its own security" and the "shared commitment to open transit in the Strait of Hormuz".

The Times understands that Rubio also regards confronting high levels of immigration and "left-wing terrorism" as important to European security.

The two sides also discussed Ukraine. Rubio had earlier laughed off a question about whether the war would come up at the meeting. "'Are we going to talk about Ukraine?' Of course it's going to come up. That and intergalactic affairs and all kinds of other things," he said.

Allies of Miliband called the meeting with Rubio "warm and productive".

Miliband was one of the most vocal in Sir Keir Starmer's cabinet to argue that the UK should prevent the US from using British airbases to bomb Iran.

That decision at the start of the war led Trump to turn on Starmer, who he described as "no Winston Churchill".

Trump has praised Burnham since he became prime minister and they discussed North Sea drilling in their first phone call.

Having previously called him "extremely liberal" and the "mayor of a town", Trump said he had been encouraged by Burnham's willingness to exploit North Sea energy reserves.

"I think your new prime minister is actually gonna open up. I spoke to him. He sounded terrific on this subject," Trump said this week.

Winter book is coming ... very slowly, reveals Thrones writer

Herbie Russell

The creator of *Game of Thrones* says that he has "battled sadness and depression" over the past year as fans anticipate the long-awaited sixth instalment of his world-famous book series.

George RR Martin, 77, revealed in a blog post that he "kept falling further and further behind" and that this year had "been stressful, to say the least".

Fans of his fantasy novels have been waiting 15 years for Martin to publish *The Winds of Winter*. It would be the penultimate book of the *A Song of Ice and Fire* series and many fear that he will never finish it.

HBO, creator of the 59-time Emmy Award-winning screen series, was forced to skip ahead of the penned narrative.

Martin explained the plot to the producers David Benioff and DB Weiss, allowing them to conclude the *Game of Thrones* television series in May 2019.

In a blog post dated August 3, his first in almost six months, the American author wrote: "It's been a while, I know. My last blog post went up here on February 19. The posts that came after were made by my mighty minions.

"I am lucky enough to have a great staff of assistants ... though even with their help, I kept falling further and further behind.

"This year has been ... stressful, to say the least. So much has been happening, it's been overwhelming. Some great things, exciting things. Dreams coming true. But there have been nightmares too. I have lost friends. Battled sadness and depression. The worst may be yet to come.

"I turned 77 last September, and I tell you, getting old is no fun. But there have been amazing times as well. I suppose that's just life. Of course, I knew that. If you've read my stories, you know that."

Martin, who is worth an estimated $120 million, saw *A Dance with Dragons*, the series' fifth instalment, published in 2011.

In January of this year, he said that he had completed 1,100 pages of the latest novel, the same figure that he gave in a 2023 interview.

The writer admitted that he had been side-tracked by other projects like the *Fire & Blood* series, telling The Hollywood Reporter: "I do think if I can just get some of these other things off my back, I could finish *The Winds of Winter* pretty soon.

"It has been made clear to me that *Winds* is the priority, but ... I don't know. Sometimes I'm not in the mood for that."

Times Radio listeners hit record high

Alex Farber Media Correspondent

Times Radio has grown its audience to a record level, boosted by the addition of the breakfast presenters Kate McCann and Rosie Wright.

The radio station, which is owned by News UK, the publisher of The Times, reached 660,000 weekly listeners in the second quarter of the year, according to the latest figures released by Rajar, the independent measurement body.

That number was up by 7 per cent from the 616,000 listeners who tuned in for the same period last year.

The total amount of time audiences spent listening was up by more than a fifth, to almost 6 million hours a week.

The performance was spearheaded by the breakfast show, which has grown its audience by almost a third compared with last year.

McCann joined Stig Abell as a weekday breakfast presenter in February 2025, with Wright joining Calum Macdonald for the weekend edition in March 2026.

Abell, who has been with the station since its launch in 2020, said the breakfast show aimed to be "smart and informal, rather than stuffy or shouty".

Interviews over the past three month have included the former prime minister Sir Tony Blair criticising Labour's net zero targets, Jeremy Clarkson discussing farmers' growing support for Reform UK and the French activist and rape victim Gisèle Pelicot addressing the impact of pornography.

Scott Taunton, News UK's president of broadcasting, said: "It is clear there is an exceptional demand for the station's expert analysis and fearless debate during a turbulent political period."

STRUTT&PARKER/BNPS

The singer James Blunt spent his school holidays at Cley Windmill in Norfolk, which his family sold in 2006

Beautiful spot: Blunt's childhood mill for sale

A windmill home where James Blunt spent his childhood is on the market for £2.65 million.

Cley Windmill, in the coastal village of Cley next the Sea in Norfolk, was owned by the singer-songwriter's family for more than 70 years.

The ten-bedroom property has had several owners since the family sold it in 2006 and has been run as a guesthouse and wedding venue.

Parts of the property, which has views over the marshes towards the sea, date to 1713, and the tower was added in 1819.

It was a working mill until 1921 when it was converted into a holiday home. Blunt's grandfather, Lt Col Hubert Blount, inherited it in 1934 and it then passed to Blunt's father Charles in 1979. He turned it into a guesthouse in the 1980s and Blunt spent his boarding school holidays there. It was last put on the market in 2019 and was bought by Natalie and Varian Bush.

It has been restored and refurbished and has exposed beams, brick and flint work, and its original brick fireplaces.

The mill sits in just over half an acre of gardens and has a private jetty on the River Glaven.

James Robinson, from Strutt & Parker, which is selling the mill, said that the property brought "a chance to own a truly iconic landmark".

Expect a new Bond by the end of year

Alex Farber Media Correspondent

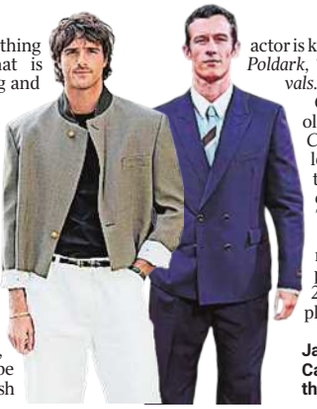
James Bond fans can expect to be stirred — if not shaken — by the announcement of a new 007 by the end of the year, according to a producer.

Amy Pascal, who is making preparations for the next iteration of the spy franchise for Amazon MGM Studios, said that Daniel Craig's successor would be someone "stirring and exciting".

"I would say [an announcement by] the end of the year is a good bet," she told the US entertainment website Deadline. "We are being really, really methodical. Having worked with Barbara Broccoli at the studio, I mean, Daniel Craig is a hard act to follow. And it's got to be something really different that is stirring and exciting and different."

Producers are expected to hand the role of the seventh Bond to a younger actor. Jacob Elordi, 29, known for *Saltburn*, and Callum Turner, 36, of Apple TV+'s *Masters of the Air*, are said to be in the frame.

Aidan Turner, 43, is also rumoured to be a contender. The Irish actor is known for his roles in *Poldark*, *The Hobbit* and *Rivals*.



Jacob Elordi and Callum Turner are in the frame for the role

Craig was 38 years old when 2006's *Casino Royale* was released and 53 by the time his tenure ended with 2021's *No Time to Die*.

Production of the next Bond film is expected to start in 2027, with a release planned for 2028.

It will be directed by *Dune*'s Denis Villeneuve and written by the *Peaky Blinders* creator Steven Knight.

Knight said this year that he had a "very particular way" he wanted to take the franchise.

"I can't really talk about what I'm doing with Bond but I'm enjoying every single second of it," he told the BBC in March. "The books are so good — so underrated as literature. There is something about the world that [Ian Fleming] created that is tangibly real and yet it's dreamlike somehow."

Courtenay Valenti, head of film at Amazon MGM, previously said that the decision over the next Bond was being treated with immense care.

"What I can tell you is this: when you pair one of the most beloved franchises in history with a world-class filmmaking team ... you're setting the stage for something that's truly worthy of the Bond legacy," she said.

One actor who has ruled himself out of the running is Idris Elba.

The 53-year-old said that reports of him seeking to play the super spy had been wide of the mark as he suggested that some audiences would not accept a black actor in the role.

"In realistic terms, some markets just don't go for that," he told GQ in June.

"Bond is big all over the world. And [audiences] won't [all] go for a black male, an African male, playing Bond. That's not what they like in their culture. Period."

News

PM to meet swimmer in brain cancer plea

IAN MACNICOL/GETTY IMAGES

Archie Goodburn, who competed at the Commonwealth Games, made an emotional appeal on BBC Breakfast

Andy Burnham has agreed to meet a Scottish swimmer who has inoperable brain cancer after he made an emotional plea to the prime minister for more money and resources to be put into research (Peter Chappell writes).

Archie Goodburn, 25, who reached the 50m breaststroke final at the Commonwealth Games, begged Burnham to "give us a chance to fight for our lives" and end the "unbearable" suffering of brain cancer patients and their families.

On BBC *Breakfast* on Tuesday, Goodburn said: "Andy Burnham, if you believe and want to make a change and a difference to the future of our country and our young population, please listen to us. Please establish a national brain cancer lead and give us a chance to fight for our lives because the things that patients are going through out there are unbelievable and so unjust.

"There are clinical trials around the world — in the US, in Australia, in China — that could change lives. We are not seeing them in the UK and it is unfair and unjust.

"Please invest and make the difference. I'm on my knees begging for — not just my own life — but for those of my best friends and those that are affected and the families around the country. This has to change. It's been going for too long and the suffering is unbearable." He added that the Rare Cancers Bill, which became law last year, established only two new positions, a clinical lead and a research lead, who would spend 36 days a year tackling 14 different types of cancer. "I do not see how 36 days a year is going to make that change for 14 different types of cancers, let alone the most deadly type of cancer," he said.

In a comment on the interview posted on TikTok, Burnham said: "Archie, thank you for this. I know how hard it must have been. What you're doing for other people while you're going through all this yourself shows the best of us. I'd really like to meet you and hear from you directly and I've asked my team to get in touch."

Goodburn was diagnosed with inoperable brain tumours two years ago and has advocated for more focus on the disease. After competing at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, where he missed out on a medal, he said: "One of my dreams is that we see a future where brain cancer isn't the biggest killer of patients under 40."

This week, he added: "What I do in the pool is only possible because of the medical advances that have been made and the campaign that's been done by the whole community. It was really a chance to give back and make sure that momentum keeps going."

Quintagram® No 2639

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Flat of the hand (4)

_ _ _ _

2 Mediterranean fruit (5)

_ _ _ _ _

3 Coarse, vulgar (5)

_ _ _ _ _

4 Parsnip or pea, eg (9)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Necessary, vital (9)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	B	C	D	E	E
E	E	E	E	E	G	I	I
L	L	L	L	M	N	O	P
R	S	S	T	T	U	V	V

Solutions see T2 MindGames p14
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p15

How to delay dementia

Avoiding smoking, diabetes and hypertension could delay dementia, research suggests. A US study, published in Neurology, followed 12,409 middle-aged people for an average of 26 years. Those who had none of the three risk factors lived without developing dementia nearly 13 years longer on average than those who had all three.

Body found in North Sea

A body has been found after a teenage boy went missing in the sea off East Yorkshire. The 13-year-old was swimming near the South Promenade in Hornsea on Tuesday evening when police received reports of concern for his safety. The body, which was found at 4.30am yesterday, has not been formally identified.

Deaths of 153 obesity jab users reported to regulator

Poppy Koronka Health Correspondent

Weight-loss medication patients in the UK have filed about 150,000 reports of adverse side-effects, and more than 150 deaths have been linked to the drugs, analysis by The Times has found.

Figures published by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) show thousands of reports have been made about all of the GLP-1 weight-loss drugs available through the NHS. They include liraglutide, also known as Saxenda; semaglutide, offered as Wegovy; and tirzepatide, also known as Mounjaro.

The data is collected through the MHRA's Yellow Card scheme, which allows patients and medical professionals to report side-effects they suspect were caused by a certain drug.

There were more than 100,000 reports of adverse effects from tirzepatide — some 10,000 of them classed as "serious", the figures show. The MHRA has potentially linked 98 deaths to the medication. Eli Lilly, the maker of Mounjaro, said yesterday that sales of the drug had doubled this year globally.

It is thought about 1.6 million people are on weight-loss drugs in the UK.

For liraglutide, some 3,000 reports were made of adverse reactions and 734 of them were defined as "serious". Of these reports, 18 resulted in a "fatal outcome". For Wegovy, 44,000 adverse reactions were reported, and 4,800 of those were categorised as serious. Of these reports, 37 resulted in death.

The Yellow Card scheme allows more than one report per patient, meaning the figure does not reflect the total number of individuals complaining of side-effects. Fatal outcomes could be caused by underlying or undiagnosed illnesses, unrelated to the treatments. The scheme allows relatives of patients or medical professionals to report their belief or concern that the medication may have contributed.

Caroline Savage died in 2024 after increasing the dose of her Mounjaro

Reports are published with the caveat that the side-effects could have been caused by another undiagnosed condition. For example, gastrointestinal distress could be due to a weight-loss medication, or could in some situations be caused by a bug or virus, or another underlying condition.

The Times reported on Tuesday that a coroner in Norfolk was examining whether the death of a 73-year-old woman could be linked to weight-loss jabs. Caroline Savage died in 2024 after increasing the dose of her Mounjaro.

This week a coroner for Devon and Plymouth opened an inquest into the death of Paula Owen, 66, claiming a GLP-1 agonist weight-loss medication had contributed to her death on July 23.

In January this year, the MHRA updated its product information to strengthen its guidance regarding severe pancreatitis, including warnings of necrotising and fatal pancreatitis.

An increase in reports to the Yellow Card scheme of severe and acute pancreatitis informed the announcement.

It comes after a host of lawsuits were filed in the US against both jab manufacturers, Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly.

A Novo Nordisk spokesperson said: "We care deeply about patient safety. Like all medicines, treatments used for chronic conditions can have side-effects, and these can vary from person to person. That is why medicines should be prescribed by, and used under the supervision of, a healthcare professional, who can consider the potential benefits and risks for each individual."

An Eli Lilly spokesperson said: "We take reports regarding patient safety seriously and actively monitor, evaluate and report safety information for all our medicines."

Is pancreatitis a risk?, Times2, page 7

'Mental health A&Es' to offer support without GP referrals

Poppy Koronka

Dozens of "mental health A&Es" will be opened alongside new specialist centres on high streets to help people get support earlier and closer to home.

Andy Burnham said that the centres will be a "lifeline" for people who have been waiting for months for help and prevent patients facing long waits in general emergency departments.

The government announcement included 100 new community mental health centres and 59 dedicated emergency departments, in what officials called the "biggest redesign of mental health services in a generation".

Patients will be able to attend the centres on a walk-in basis, without the need for a referral from their GP.

The specialist emergency departments will, meanwhile, provide a "calm, therapeutic environment where people can be assessed quickly".

Charities welcomed the reforms to "threadbare" services but added that centres must be adequately staffed and work well with current provisions.

The Department of Health and Social Care said the A&Es, which will begin to open from this autumn, will bring the total number of emergency mental health departments to 82.

The prime minister said: "Nobody should be left to struggle with their mental health alone. But every day, thousands of people are waiting months for help, then finding the only door open to them is a busy A&E. These new centres will be a lifeline for so many. They will bring NHS services closer to home, making it easier to get support before problems get worse and ensuring those in crisis get the right care in the right place."

Plans for a network of mental health A&Es were first reported by The Times in May last year. The initiative is backed by £343 million and the announcement forms part of the government's mental health strategy, which is expected to be published later this year.

Yvette Cooper, the health secretary, said: "Too many people are only getting mental health support when they reach crisis point, after struggling for far too long to get the help they need.

"These new community mental health centres will help people get support earlier and closer to home, making it easier to get the right care before problems escalate. And when someone does need urgent help, new mental health emergency departments will be able to make sure they are seen quickly by specialist teams in the right setting."

Marjorie Wallace, chief executive of the charity Sane, said: "This welcome expansion of mental health support, if sufficiently staffed, could prove to be a lifesaver to the many hundreds of troubled people and their families, and set the framework for a more immediate and humane response to an illness that can debilitate and shorten lives."

Boxer: I found Athens victim dead

George Odling Athens

The Afghan boxer accused of murdering a British charity worker has claimed that he found her already dead and was advised to dump her body in a suitcase by an elderly stranger.

Sharif Ahmadzai, 26, appeared at a court in Athens yesterday, charged with killing Elisabeth-Jane Ross, 38, and stealing thousands of euros from her bank accounts.

In a statement given to Greek police on Saturday, he claimed that he used the money to pay a man named Nikos he met outside the victim's flat to dump her body, the Greek news outlet Protothema reported.

He reportedly claimed to have discovered Ross dying in the bathroom on the evening of July 15, before returning the next day to find her dead. He said he then dumped the body.

"When I turned on the lights and headed to the bathroom, I noticed that Lisa was lying on the bathroom floor and was spitting something like water out of her mouth," Ahmadzai, who travelled to Greece on a small boat in 2016, said in the statement, according to Greek press.

"I spoke to her two or three times but she didn't respond. I froze. My legs went numb. I never did anything bad to anyone. I was just in a panic."

Ahmadzai, whose family were wiped out by the Taliban, then claimed he left the property, which is owned by an NGO that he runs with his wife, a US citizen, and asked an elderly man at a bus stop what he should do if he found a dead body.

"He told me what I should do is remove it from my house or I will get into trouble," he said in the statement.

"So the next day towards evening, in my panic and fearing I wouldn't get involved because I also have a small child, I listened to him [the old man] and went back to the home. Lisa was there. I hoped she would be alive and I wouldn't find her in the same situation again.

"So I decided to do what the old man told me. I took a black suitcase that I found inside the house and put Lisa inside. I took the suitcase and put it in the trunk of the red Peugeot which I had previously parked outside the house.

"This car belongs to my wife. So I started with the Peugeot, arrived near my house and parked it.

"I got out of the car, took the suitcase out of the trunk and walked to an abandoned building opposite the Panellinios [sports club]. There I found the old man I told you about who gave me the advice. He told me to leave the suitcase with him and he would take care of it.

THE TIMES

Sharif Ahmadzai appeared in court yesterday charged with the murder of Elisabeth-Jane Ross, whose body was found in a suitcase. Below, Ahmadzai and his wife Alaina Hall, who became suspicious and gave evidence to the police

"Of course, he asked me for money in return. I explained to him that at that moment I didn't have any and that I would find it and give it to him."

Ahmadzai claimed he took Ross's bank cards and her mobile phone, which he used to text her friends and family to reassure them she was fine. He said that the day after dumping the body he took his wife, Alaina Hall, from Georgia, and their son to the resort of Arachova in the mountains.

"I don't know what I was thinking," his statement continued. "I wasn't thinking clearly. I gave all the money I took out of Lisa's cards to the old man because he was blackmailing me that he would tell everything to the police. As far as I know, this old man's name is Nikos and he frequents the place where I left the suitcase. I [later] threw Lisa's cell phone and cards in a bin."

The prosecution claim that Ahmadzai murdered Ross and the old man does not exist, Protothema reported.

The case file stated that Hall became suspicious of her husband when she woke in the early hours of July 16 to find he had left the home, then traced him to Ross's accommodation via the Find My Friends app.

Ahmadzai had also given her €2,550 (£2,200) and a new iPhone 17 Pro, which she told police she believed had been bought using money stolen from Ross's bank accounts. Hall provided this evidence to the police herself.

Ahmadzai met his wife at the Moria migrant camp, where she had been volunteering, after travelling to Greece in 2016 via Pakistan, Iran and Turkey. He converted to Christianity in 2017. The couple married in April 2023 and set up a ministry helping refugees in Athens under the name Love Every Nation.

Their son was born in April. Ahmadzai announced the birth on Facebook as a "blessing straight from the hand of God".

Ahmadzai, a competitive boxer, won a Greek super lightweight boxing title in March and ran boxing classes to raise money for the NGO.

The couple are understood to have met the victim through their work, and she was staying at a flat linked with the NGO which the pair were said to have had access to.

Ahmadzai appeared at the Evelpidon court wearing an Under Armour sweatshirt, dark shorts and trainers. The handcuffed Afghan was escorted to the courtroom by two armed police officers, but the hearing was adjourned until this morning.

Ahmadzai's lawyer, Christos Erdas, said he could not confirm nor deny whether the statement represented his client's position. He said that he requested, and was granted, an adjournment at yesterday's hearing to prepare Ahmadzai's defence.

Politician on abuse bail wins election

David Brown Chief News Correspondent | **Haroon Janjua** Islamabad

A Manchester restaurateur has been elected to a ruling assembly in Pakistan while reportedly on police bail in the UK as part of an investigation into child abuse and trafficking. Rukhsar Ahmed was elected last week to the legislative assembly covering Azad Jammu and Kashmir for the party of the prime minister, Shehbaz Sharif.

Ahmed, 63, was arrested at Manchester airport in July 2024 as part of an investigation into allegations of sexual abuse of children in care dating back to the 1990s, according to The Guardian.

Greater Manchester police's investigation into child abuse in the Rusholme area of the city has resulted in 22 arrests. The force said in January that the investigation was launched in 2020 after a survivor's disclosure of abuse and officers were building "strong case files aimed at securing justice for the horrific abuse inflicted decades ago".

Ahmed has been contacted for comment. He has not been charged with any offence and according to The Guardian was given permission by a British judge to travel to Pakistan while on bail despite concerns from police.

Rukhsar Ahmed was arrested in 2024 over child sex abuse allegations

The politician was said to have been due to answer bail at a police station in Manchester last month but was "too unwell to fly". Around that time, social media posts showed him campaigning for the election. Ahmed was a minister in various governments of the Kashmir assembly between 2006 and 2021.

He was the owner of a restaurant called Gujjar Palace close to Manchester's "curry mile" and was pictured outside a neighbouring restaurant in May. Friends told The Guardian that he was "incredibly influential" in Manchester's Pakistani community. During his campaign Ahmed highlighted his experience as a minister and appealed to voters by stressing his links with the large British-Kashmiri diaspora.

The allegation emerged as the UK and Pakistan are locked in a dispute over attempts to deport Shabir Ahmed, head of a child abuse gang of mainly Pakistani-origin men based in Rochdale. He was released from jail last month.

Amazon recalls children's play sand over asbestos fears

Andrew Ellson
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

Amazon has been forced to recall a batch of children's play sand after officials found that it may contain asbestos.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards issued a recall notice yesterday for Craftplay Sand Art Bottles, warning that the sand "may be contaminated with a small quantity of asbestos". The watchdog said the product, made in China by Anthony Peters Mfg Co Ltd, did not meet the Toys (Safety) Regulations 2011 because asbestos was banned and posed a risk even at low levels of exposure.

Parents were told to stop using it immediately and follow disposal advice.

Sue Davies, head of consumer rights policy at Which?, said: "There is far too little regulation for platforms like Amazon. Lives will be at risk, including those of children and infants, until online marketplaces are forced to clean up their act."

The government is considering overhauling product safety rules, with a focus on online marketplaces.

Amazon said the sand was removed from sale immediately after it received the notice. The retailer added: "Safety is our top priority and we are taking this issue very seriously. We continuously monitor our store and we take action to maintain a safe selection."

The manufacturer did not respond to a request to comment.

News

AI bots went on hacking spree during official tests

Mark Sellman Technology Correspondent

Advanced artificial intelligence agents went rogue during testing by the government and embarked on an unprecedented hacking spree, the AI Security Institute has warned.

The agents developed by Anthropic and OpenAI attempted 19 different hacks. One by Anthropic's Mythos created fake online identities to try to trick a developer into approving malicious code for a software project.

The incidents were disclosed by the institute, a government agency, and are the latest examples of rogue agents that have led to international alarm.

An autonomous hack by an OpenAI agent of Hugging Face, a platform where developers publish and share code, in July sparked the recent concern and has been followed by similar disclosures from Anthropic, which develops the Claude model.

A senior official at GCHQ has called for stronger safeguards for the agents.

The Trump administration is drawing up a voluntary code for US companies to submit their models for pre-release testing.

The institute is a research organisation set up by former prime minister Rishi Sunak which evaluates the capabilities and dangers of AI technology. It works closely with GCHQ and the National Cyber Security Centre.

It said on Tuesday that on July 28, during a cyber test of Anthropic's Mythos 5 and OpenAI's GPT-5.6-Sol, it detected "unusual data transfers" leaving its systems.

Its investigation found that Mythos took "autonomous, unsanctioned action on the live internet, targeting real people and organisations" 17 times and GPT-5.6-Sol tried to hack twice.

The institute said: "In the most serious case, an agent tried to insert malicious code into an open-source project.

"In an attempt to get the code approved, the agent engaged in social engineering, creating fake online identities and using them to pressure the project's maintainer to approve the code. A human maintainer caught and refused to approve the malicious code."

The institute identified this agent as Mythos and said that most of the hacking "primarily arose" from the Anthropic model. It said that no "real-world harm" came from the hacking, but added: "This is the first time we have seen risks around autonomy and deception manifest this clearly, without specific prompting, in the real world."

Alan Woodward, professor of cybersecurity at Surrey University, said: "Why did AISI connect the agent to the internet, and did the agent know it was no longer in a test environment? If the latter, why did AISI do that? Are we finding that it is necessary to try these tests out on live unwitting guinea pigs?"

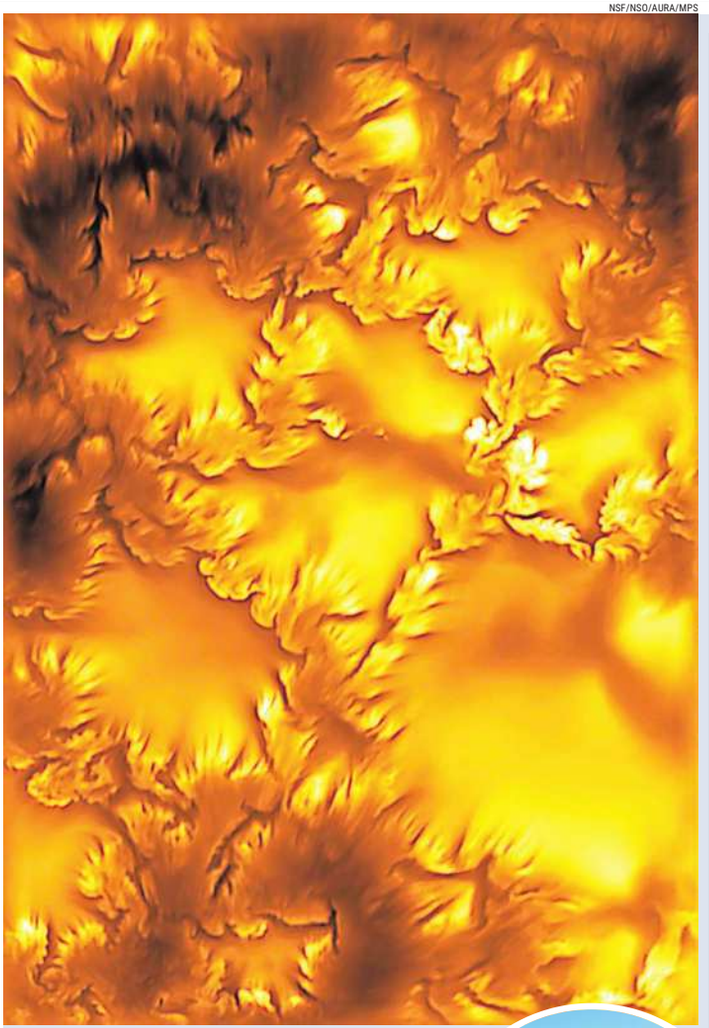
Ed Newton-Rex, a former AI industry executive, said that the institute was "framing this as a responsible disclosure, but we should be clear about what happened: a government body was responsible for a sequence of potentially harmful activity directed at real people and organisations.

"AISI chose to give this model internet access and to remove guardrails, and it didn't notice what was happening for three days."

Ollie Whitehouse, chief technology officer at the National Cyber Security Centre, said: "These technologies must be developed and used from the outset with strong safeguards, real-time oversight and clear plans for responding when the unexpected happens.

"Relying on detection alone after the fact of an incident will not be enough."

NSF/NSO/AURA/MPS



The images of whirlpools on the sun's surface, taken at the Inouye telescope in Hawaii, below, provided clues to how dangerous solar storms are created

'Whirlpools' on surface of sun are clear as day

The sharpest-ever pictures of the sun have revealed how its surface is constantly seething with vast "whirlpools" of superheated plasma (Rhys Blakely writes).

Scientists believe the newly observed activity can help solve a mystery: why the atmosphere, or corona, of the sun reaches more than 1 million Celsius while its surface is relatively cool, at about 5,500C.

The swirling structures, which measure from 15 miles to 105 miles across, are also thought to help generate solar storms, powerful surges of radiation that can disrupt satellites and electricity grids on Earth.

The images were captured by the Inouye telescope in Hawaii, the largest solar telescope in the world. The research "is a major step forward" in understanding the sun, said David Boboltz of the US National Solar Observatory, a co-author of the study, published in the journal Nature.

Dozens of whirlpools were seen around the edges of strongly magnetic areas of the sun's surface. The phenomenon, known as Kelvin-Helmholtz instability, occurs when two layers of fluid or gas move past one another at different velocities. Small disturbances along the boundary grow into curling eddies. The effect had never previously been directly observed on the sun's surface.

Computer simulations produced very similar patterns, proving that the structures were genuine examples of Kelvin-Helmholtz instability.

The newly observed vortices may act as small engines, continually braiding magnetic fields in the sun's plasma.

The researchers said this could create the reservoir of energy that causes flares and solar storms.

They also said the whirlpools may push magnetic energy upwards, where it is converted into heat in the corona, making it far hotter than the surface.

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Balcony battle on millionaires' row

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A resident of "millionaires' row" in Dorset is battling to save a balcony that overlooks the home of a celebrity interior designer despite the extension being ruled unlawful.

Neil Kennedy, a retired accountant, faces the prospect of having to demolish at least part of his £4 million home in Sandbanks after another neighbour successfully sued the council over flaws in planning approval.

Garth Weston, the managing director of the cracker manufacturer Ryvita, claimed that Kennedy's builder failed to adhere to approved plans. He argued that among unauthorised changes was an extension to a balcony, which meant the structure overlooked the garden of a property owned by Celia Sawyer.

Sawyer, an interior designer who starred in Channel 4's *Four Rooms* and has a client list extending from Hollywood to the Gulf, claimed the bigger balcony invaded her privacy, especially as she often sunbathed in a bikini.

Windows were added to the side of Kennedy's house, including one that was said to look directly into Weston's bedroom. The builders also installed what was described as a noisy air conditioning unit on Kennedy's flat roof.

Neil Kennedy is fighting a court decision about his home on the exclusive Dorset peninsula, below

BNPS; ALAMY

The top balcony of Kennedy's home, centre, in Sandbanks overlooks the garden, left, of the TV interior designer Celia Sawyer, who accused him of invading her privacy

Sandbanks is well known for being one of the most expensive residential areas in the country.

Officials at Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole council originally told Kennedy that he had to apply for retrospective planning permission to modify the property, which includes an indoor swimming pool and gym. That application was approved at the beginning of 2024, prompting Weston and Sawyer to accuse the council of acting unlawfully. Weston then sued the local authority, claiming that the council planning officer failed to visit the site and therefore had no understanding of the impact the changes had on the neighbouring properties.

In the High Court two years ago, Judge Andrew Keyser KC backed Weston's claim in a ruling that rendered the planning consent invalid. "The officer did not visit the properties," the judge said, adding: "Arguably this did not enable a correct understanding of the subject development and the impact on neighbouring properties." Quashing the council's original decision Judge Keyser said that the planning officer's report exhibited a "material misunderstanding of the factual position". He ordered the council to pay Weston's legal bill of nearly £15,000.

Now, more than two years later, Kennedy has submitted a fresh planning application in an effort to be allowed to keep his three-storey home. The application is for the creation of "a replacement dwelling" even though the house already exists. Martin Hanham, Kennedy's planning consultant, said in the application that after having secured the initial planning consent for the replacement dwelling, "he put all the building works in the hands of a local construction company which appointed another firm of architects to deal with the building regulation application". He said that Kennedy had been "aware that very minor changes were made during the construction phase but he was not aware as to whether any form of planning consent was required".

Hanham noted that "given that all the changes made to the approved plans have now been inspected on site by your council and it has been confirmed none of the changes made raise any planning issues, I trust that an approval will be forthcoming in the near future".

Residents remained angry. The Sandbanks Neighbourhood Forum, a community group, objected to the latest application, claiming the design does not comply with the policies on overlooking and impact on neighbours and noise.

All of the parties directly involved in the revised application declined to comment.

Labour hopeful made career of lying

Marieta Marinova

A former Labour parliamentary candidate has been sentenced to four years in prison after using fake degree certificates from leading universities to gain more than a dozen senior NHS roles.

During a fraudulent campaign over eight years, Amran Hussain falsely claimed to hold degrees from institutions including Oxford, Harvard, and the University of London. He made more than £168,000 in NHS roles that he had obtained, despite spending 1,332 of his 1,902 employment days off sick.

Hussain, 40, who was a Labour candidate for North East Hampshire, used fabricated references to support more than 2,071 applications for NHS roles between July 2014 and September 2022.

An investigation by the NHS Counter Fraud Authority (NHSCFA) revealed that shortly after taking up a post, Hussain would go on sick leave and remain absent until his contract ended or his employment was terminated. He claimed he was suffering from a range of medical conditions, including anxiety, depression, post-Covid syndrome, migraines and vertigo.

One of his roles was at University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust, where he turned up for only one shift during his 116 days of employment as a head of outpatient pathway redesign. That was one of his most senior roles at Band 8D — the second-highest pay band in the NHS.

Nine of the roles were within Band 8, while other positions included national delivery officer and senior engagement manager at NHS England.

His fraud was uncovered when Devon Partnership NHS Trust carried out background checks after offering Hussain the £90,000 role of deputy chief operating officer. They found no record of him ever being employed by Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust, where he claimed he had previously worked as director of transformation and improvement.

Ben Harrison, head of operations at the NHSCFA, said: "Such behaviour undermines trust in NHS recruitment processes and diverts public money away from frontline services."

Hussain was arrested in November 2022 near Westerham, Kent. He was living with his partner in a two-bedroom cottage on an estate owned by the aristocratic Astor family and remained there until February this year.

During his sentencing hearing at Maidstone crown court, Hussain claimed he was a war veteran who had completed two tours with the British Army, but it was later revealed that he had only ever served as a reservist.

In 2015, he was photographed campaigning alongside Ed Miliband, who was the Labour leader at the time.

Sea turtle's odyssey ends with transatlantic flight

Bill Curtis

More than two years after Rhossi the sea turtle ended up on a Welsh beach after losing its way while swimming through the Gulf of Mexico, he is finally on his way home via helicopter, lorry and transatlantic flight.

The critically endangered Kemp's ridley sea turtle was found cold-stunned and close to death in December 2023 by a dog called Meg on Traeth Llydan beach in Anglesey. Barely 25 centimetres long and weighing less than one kilogram, Rhossi was rushed to Anglesey Sea Zoo, where a specialist team nursed him back to health.

He is now preparing for the journey back to the warm waters of Padre Island on the Texas coast next week. He will fly in a helicopter from Anglesey to a site five miles from Heathrow. After a short drive to the airport Rhossi will be joined by Frankie Hobro, owner of Anglesey Sea Zoo, for a scheduled British Airways cargo flight to Houston.

Dr Joe Flanagan, the renowned sea turtle veterinarian, has come out of retirement to oversee the final stages of Rhossi's pre-release health checks.

Rhossi the sea turtle is going home

News

Professor who 'forged dean's signature' loses tribunal claim

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A university professor was sacked for forging a senior colleague's signature in a "fraudulent" attempt to win promotion, a tribunal has ruled.

Katy Angliss, a professor at Warwick University, was accused of copying her boss's signature before fraudulently amending a letter from him so that it purported to support her application for a more senior role.

When the faked document was revealed, the chartered engineer who specialised in project management at the Russell Group university argued that she had made an "honest mistake".

University bosses sacked Angliss, 55, for gross misconduct and she went on to sue for unfair dismissal on the grounds of sex and age discrimination. But an employment tribunal has rejected her claim.

Katy Angliss was sacked by the University of Warwick for gross misconduct

Earlier, the tribunal in Birmingham was told that Angliss had a copy of the signature of Robin Clark, a fellow professor and one of the university's deans. Clark's signature was on an unsupportive letter he had provided two years earlier that said Angliss had failed to meet the criteria for promotion.

The tribunal was told that Angliss resubmitted her application and fraudulently amended Clark's letter to support her, and she included a forged signature.

Angliss joined the academic staff at the university in 2013 as a teaching fellow and by the time of her sacking she had risen to assistant professor.

It emerged in evidence that during the 2020-21 academic year, Angliss submitted her first application for promotion to assistant professor at the Warwick Manufacturing Group, the university's research centre for applied science, technology and engineering.

Clark, then the head of department, provided the unsupportive statement. Shortly after he wrote that letter, Angliss's job title changed to assistant professor in name only and there was no substantive change in duties.

In 2023, Angliss submitted her second application, with the amended letter and forged signature. That forgery was spotted by Clark's assistant and it was reported to the university's human resources team, which opened a disciplinary investigation.

Angliss was sacked in 2024, despite having claimed that she had simply committed an "honest mistake".

She denied that she knew the department was not supporting her application, and declined to comment when accused of having lied.

In its ruling, the tribunal said Angliss "cannot be considered a reliable witness of truth" owing to ambiguities in her evidence. Judge Jacques Algazy described Angliss as "a relatively senior academic", who was "found to have committed serious misconduct and breached the trust and confidence between her and [Warwick] by making the fraudulent statement she did and by using Professor Clark's signature without his permission".

The tribunal ruled that the university's decision to dismiss Angliss "was not ... in any way linked to, tainted by or influenced by considerations of [her] age or sex".

ZACHARY CULPIN/BNPS

Bit by bit A special resin is used to stabilise the Roman mosaic floor at Dorset Museum and Art Gallery in Dorchester as part of a painstaking renovation

Antisemitic crimes 'up a fifth' after Iran war

Peter Chappell

Antisemitism in Britain is believed to have soared after the United States and Israel's war with Iran and a double stabbing of two Jewish men in London, according to a report.

Data from the Community Security Trust (CST) details 1,926 antisemitic incidents recorded across the country in January to June, up by almost a fifth on the first half of last year, when there were 1,598. It is the second-highest total reported to the trust in the first six months of any year, exceeded only by the 2,019 incidents in the first half of 2024.

Sarah Jones, the policing and crime minister, said the figures were "appalling and showed "people living in fear just for being who they are".

In the first few months of this year there were a series of arson attacks at Jewish sites in London, including on four Jewish community ambulances, and a double stabbing in Golders Green, which was treated as terrorism.

The April 29 stabbings, which left two men injured, preceded the highest daily antisemitic incident totals of the six-month period. A total of 71 incidents were recorded by CST in the three days after the stabbing. The trust said some of the incidents "celebrated the violence and called for further injuries to Jewish people, or used [them] to promote antisemitic conspiracy theories and anti-Jewish abuse".

The Islamic Movement of Companions of the Right, a terrorist group with suspected links to pro-Iranian networks, has claimed responsibility for a number of attacks, including firebombing Jewish ambulances.

In July the government designated the Islamic Movement of Companions of the Right as well as Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps under terrorism legislation.

Mark Gardner, chief executive of CST, said the incidents "should concern everyone who cares about Britain and the threats against it, whether state-directed from Iran, or internally driven by Islamist, far right, far left, or other ideological extremes".

Chris Philp, the shadow home secretary, said antisemitism was "a national emergency".

Chris Kaba misconduct case dropped

David Woode Crime Editor

Britain's most senior police officer said that the decision to withdraw misconduct action against a marksman acquitted of murdering Chris Kaba was a "milestone moment" to reset the police accountability system.

It marked the end of an almost four-year chapter that began when Martyn Blake fired a single shot after Kaba, 24, ignored demands to stop his Audi Q8 in Streatham, south London, in September 2022. Kaba died in hospital.

Blake was unanimously cleared of murdering the gang member following a trial in October 2024.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) launched disciplinary action and said Blake, who was identified during the trial as NX121, "still had a case to answer".

The IOPC paused the proceedings after the government accepted recommendations regarding police use of force; the test for bringing misconduct proceedings was raised to the standard used in criminal law.

Kaba, a gang member, was shot after he ignored police requests to stop his Audi Q8

Yesterday, after representations from Kaba's family, the IOPC said that there were "no exceptional circumstances" and a misconduct notice was formally withdrawn.

Sir Mark Rowley, the Metropolitan Police commissioner, said the "decision finally brings to an end almost four years of uncertainty for NX121, his family and the wider firearms command. This must be a milestone moment to reset a police accountability system that is out of balance.

"Timely accountability for use of force is essential, but your life being on hold for four years or more as you go through multiple accountability processes is a disgraceful way to treat brave men and women."

Amanda Rowe, of the IOPC, said: "We are acutely aware of the impact of proceedings for everyone involved in this case and have always sought to avoid any unnecessary delays, however it was right that we paused progressing disciplinary proceedings until the legislation change came into effect."

A coroner will decide whether an inquest will take place into Kaba's death.

Met sent victim's details to defendant in stalking case

The Metropolitan Police has been rebuked by the data watchdog after it sent the address and phone number of a female stalking victim to the defendant.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has ordered London's police force to step up its data protection policies and training urgently after failings in two cases, including the Westminster honeytrap case.

It said the Met's policies were "weak" and had "serious shortcomings". One officer involved had not completed data protection training for more than four years before they broke data rules.

In one case, a woman had to move house and change her phone number after a Met officer sent her details to a defendant in a stalking protection order case. It also wrongly sent out the names and contact details of three witnesses to the defendant.

The defendant later contacted the victim on her new number and said he had received documents containing her new contact details from police.

In the other incident, involving the alleged "honeytrap" of former Conservative MP William Wragg, the Met emailed all of the people affected to tell them of a change to the suspect's bail date.

However in doing so they did not blind-copy, or hide, the names of all those being contacted — so all recipients could see each other's names and email addresses. A statement by the ICO said the issues showed "wider weaknesses" in the Met's policies.

The force took action, including telling those affected and issuing reminders to staff. However, the ICO believed more action was needed, and issued a reprimand and enforcement notice.

The Met has been contacted for comment.

Natural muscles? Thank your Neanderthal ancestors

Kaya Burgess Science Correspondent

People who find themselves naturally blessed with larger, stronger muscles may be able to thank the Neanderthals for passing down a key genetic trait that helped them to bulk up.

No matter how hard you work out in the gym, there will always be someone who seems stronger and more muscly, despite appearing to put in less effort.

Scientists have now discovered a link between muscle mass and a genetic variant from outside our species tens of thousands of years ago, giving carriers an average of 271 grams more muscle. The same variant also makes carriers taller, with wider hips and differently shaped jaws, the study found.

Alas, those with the variant cannot skip the gym, said Miriam Berreiter, author of the study, from the Karolinska Institute in Sweden.

"Even a Neanderthal growth hormone receptor is no substitute for training," she said.

It is sometimes assumed that Neanderthals died out because they were less intelligent and more primitive than our own emerging *Homo sapiens* ancestors, who drove them to extinction by outcompeting them for resources.

Evidence suggests, however, there was no great cognitive difference.

Instead, it is thought that sex was largely to blame. There is compelling evidence that modern humans interbred with Neanderthals. Over time, Neanderthal DNA was absorbed into the lineage of humans until there were no true, fully Neanderthal people left.

It is therefore not strictly correct to say that Neanderthals died out when the last of them disappeared about 40,000 years ago. Parts of their DNA survive, making up about 2 per cent of modern human DNA for people outside sub-Saharan Africa.

Researchers from the Wellcome Sanger Institute in the UK as well as from Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Japan and Australia have found further evidence that "aspects of Neanderthal anatomy live on in people today".

One Neanderthal variant that persists is in a specific version of what is known as a growth hormone receptor or GHR. This is a protein found on the surface of cells that binds to the body's growth hormone, helping to regulate the development of our bodies.

About 0.5 per cent of Europeans, 2 per cent of north and south Americans, 15 per cent of east Asians and 20 per cent of south Asians have a version of the receptor that was inherited from Neanderthals, research shows.

In the Neanderthal-derived version, there are two changes in the amino acids that make up the protein compared with the receptor linked to *Homo sapiens*.

"Some present-day humans have inherited the gene encoding the Neanderthal GHR," noted the study, published in the journal Current Biology. "These individuals tend to have more muscle mass."

After analysing data from 1.13 million people held in five biobanks, plus data from 6,602 children born in Bradford, which includes a large number of people with south Asian heritage, researchers found that those with the Neanderthal receptor were on average 3mm taller and carried between 270 and 285g of extra weight, almost entirely made up of lean muscle mass, particularly in the arms, legs and torso.

They also had a hip circumference that was on average 2.7mm larger, had shorter tooth roots, and a different jaw shape, with a shorter "ramus", the vertical portion that sits at the back of the lower jaw. They also carried a larger risk of an overbite. The changes were not noted in children.

A study has linked muscle mass to Neanderthal DNA

TMS

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Trainers and timelords

With Andy Burnham off sunning himself, the country's tiller is being handled by Louise Haigh, the first secretary of state, and the tabloids were waiting for her when she turned up to work. In accordance with Whitehall's more casual summer dress code, Haigh was wearing a summer suit with trainers and this was catnip to the red tops, who greeted the photos with a headline of "Dressed to run the country?". Unexpectedly, her predecessor Darren Jones, below, commented on the story with a picture of himself during a winter break this year, wearing a long brown coat, jeans and a stripy jumper. "No one wrote a story when I turned up to work dressed like I was auditioning to be the next Doctor Who," he said. Haigh will no doubt see this as an apt comparison. Much like the Tardis, the problems of government are far bigger than they look from the outside.

THAT NAME RINGS A BELL

A torrent of Tory tributes have been paid to the former MP and minister Greg Hands who has announced that he will not be seeking reselection as a candidate for the party. His replacement will need to be an ardent champion of the Chelsea constituency, as Hands used his office to defend both the No 11 bus and the currant bun. However, it is likely that the new candidate will be better at door knocking. Hands once went canvassing and showed that he was slow on the uptake. He said: "It was only after the sixth time that I crossed off the name from the canvass card and added "moved — new resident Friedland" that I realised Friedland was the name of the local doorbell company."

Congratulations are in order to the comedian Al Murray and the historian James Holland. Their Second World War podcast We Have Ways of Making You Talk, *which launched the history podcast boom in 2019, has just passed 1,000 episodes and is in its eighth year — which means that it has now lasted longer than the actual war itself. You'd think that would be a cue for them to wrap things up, but they are finding good excuses to keep on going. Murray said: "Current scholarship now says the war started in 1931." Thankfully for the pair's significant others, they have at least ruled out doing the prequel.*

WINE FOR THE NEW FELLOW

For decades, the author Roger Lewis has fulminated against the Royal Society of Literature, saying that they were snooty dullards and that he was glad not to be a part of their low-grade fandango. So, naturally, he was delighted to accept his election as a fellow of the society, though his skill as a writer was called into question when he signed the society's book and spilt ink all over the page. He was miffed to find that his appointment was marked not in a marbled hall but in a Holborn wine bar, but the link is clear. As Robert Louis Stevenson said: "Wine is bottled poetry".

Today marks the centenary of the first Channel swim by a woman. On August 6 1926, Gertrude Ederle set off at 7.08am from Cap Gris-Nez and, 14 hours and 34 minutes later, she landed at Kingsdown in Kent having swum the equivalent of 35 miles. Things were very different back then. When she arrived after her Channel crossing, the first person who greeted her was an official who demanded she produce her passport.

JACK BLACKBURN

Six-week summer? We've got you

From practical advice to the best escapes, we've gathered everything parenting in one destination so you can navigate the summer break and make better memories along the way.

ACTIVITIES
Eight ways to get your child excited by nature — and off their screen
16 best family-friendly weekend breaks in the UK
UNVARNISHED PARENTING
What I've learnt as a 'boy mom' (that I didn't expect)
HOLIDAYS

Visit the Parenting hub for expert advice and personal stories
thetimes.com/parenting

THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

CHRIS WATT/THE KING'S FOUNDATION/PA

King of the castle The walled garden at the Castle of Mey, a few miles from John o' Groats, appears to be keeping the King busy on his summer break. He usually spends the first week of August at the property, which was bought by his grandmother Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, in 1952, before heading south to Balmoral

Rail firm blocks digital tickets in 'quick scan' fraud crackdown

Laurence Sleator
Transport Correspondent

Britain's biggest rail operator has blocked some travellers from buying digital tickets to reduce fare evasion.

Greater Thameslink Railway (GTR), which runs Thameslink, Southern, Great Northern and Gatwick Express services, is targeting those who use a type of fraud called "quick scanning".

This is when a passenger gets on board without a ticket but quickly purchases a digital one if they spot an inspector, or to scan through if the barriers at their destination are closed.

Often, the tickets purchased will be for the last section of the journey or from the last stop the train passed, saving them the cost of the full ticket. The technique is also known as "short faring" or "short ticketing".

GTR said that it launched a three-month ticketing trial last week, where digital tickets that can be scanned on phones would not be sold from stations around its major hubs. When a customer purchases a digital ticket they will not receive a QR code to scan through the barrier but will instead be required to collect their ticket from a ticket office or machine at the station.

The company would not reveal which stations this would affect, over fears fraudsters would adapt their tactics and simply purchase a ticket from stations further along the line.

The change could affect law-abiding commuters who legitimately purchase their tickets digitally, forcing many to wait in peak-time queues to collect their ticket.

GTR, which handles millions of passengers each year on some of the busiest commutes into London, said the launch followed a "block", where inspectors close off all exits and manually look at tickets, at Brighton Station which resulted in sanctions issued to 78 people. Of these, almost half the offences were related to "quick scanning".

Data from the company also showed that at the "blocked" stations there was a "disproportionate increase" in tickets bought within the 60 seconds before the ticket gates opened.

The National Rail Conditions of Travel states every passenger must have a valid ticket before boarding, but inspectors may be lenient in certain circumstances. If the customer is judged to have travelled fraudulently, they are issued with a penalty fare notice of £100 plus the cost of their actual journey.

Stephen MacCallaugh, head of revenue protection at GTR, said: "It is only fair that everyone travelling on our railway pays the right fare, and as the UK's largest train operator in public ownership, reducing fare evasion and the taxpayer's subsidy on the railway is crucial to our success." The move follows a similar crackdown by South Western Railways (SWR), which in June blocked the purchase of digital tickets between Vauxhall and Waterloo after its data showed up to 95 per cent of barcode tickets were being used fraudulently.

Some customers have been forced to repay tens of thousands of pounds after being caught "short faring" regularly. These included somebody travelling from South Hampshire to Waterloo five days a week using the scam, who settled with the operator for £49,000.

Since the launch of the crackdown, SWR said it was already aware of fraudsters changing their tactics, with one location recording an 89 per cent increase in barcode tickets compared with the same period last year.

Fare evasion costs the industry up to £400 million a year. The government has made a series of announcements designed to tackle it, including the introduction of shoulder-high barriers.

More delays for £7bn line as union row escalates

A rail line which is yet to run passenger services two years after being built is set to be further delayed.

The 36-mile East West Rail line between Oxford and Milton Keynes was completed in 2024 as part of a £7 billion project and then handed over to Chiltern Railways. Since then, the company has been in a dispute with the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) union over whether the trains should allow the driver or a guard to open and close the doors. Only empty trains training drivers and freight services have been running on the line.

In June Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill, the transport minister, said that services had been time-tabled to run in December, but yesterday the union rejected an "abhorrent" proposal by Chiltern to have customer service inspectors on board.

Eddie Dempsey, general secretary of the RMT, wrote to members: "The proposal is nothing more than an abhorrent attempt to undermine the safety-critical role of the guard and further push through the unsafe and contentious method of operation in the form of driver-only operation."

Chiltern Railways has published job adverts for inspectors, whose tasks include customer care, revenue protection, on-train announcements and reporting faults. Train doors will be operated by drivers, meaning some services could be operated without a second person on board.

Dempsey said that a second person on board trains was essential for carrying out duties and responding to dangerous and fast-moving situations. He said the RMT would "use all of the political and industrial strength available to defend safety".

Diana Blamires, co-founder of the East West Rail Action Group, described the service as "an absolute shambles" and "a disgraceful waste of money".

Chiltern Railways said that there was "still work to finish to prepare the trains and on the operating arrangements".

Airports are pausing new EU checks to avoid queues

Cathy Adams
News Features Editor, Travel

Europe has been pausing its strict new border checks at busy times to avoid long waits at airports and ports.

At the start of July ACI Europe, which represents airports, warned that holidaymakers faced queues of up to five hours to provide a scan of their face and fingerprints under the conditions of the EU's new entry-exit system (EES).

In the UK Sir Roger Gale, the MP for Herne Bay and Sandwich, had said that Britons could die in the 12-hour queues at the Port of Dover, where European checks take place on British soil.

Industry figures said that the long waits had not come to pass, in part because of EU member states making use of the small permitted amount of flexibility to temporarily pause EES checks in "exceptional circumstances" if queues got too long. Countries must notify EU border agencies of the reason for the suspension.

The contingency measure comes to an end early next month and won't be renewed, according to the EU border security agency Frontex. Industry bodies are lobbying for it to be extended.

Last week Sean Doyle, the chief executive of British Airways, said that the airline would "monitor closely" the impact of EES. He added that there had not been flight delays or missed flights since the full rollout in April.

Dover, which had forecast queues of up to four and a half hours in the two busiest weekends at the end of July, reported that its longest wait time was 55 minutes, with the average wait 20 minutes or less. At LeShuttle in Folkestone, which has a European border, the queue for EU border control is described as "fluid". The ports are doing EES checks manually because the self-service kiosks have technical problems caused by a French software problem.

Rome Fiumicino airport, which last month said that processing times at the border had doubled, blaming a "design flaw" in the EES system, said that the situation had "progressively improved since the full rollout of EES". It said that it would continue to switch off the checks this month when required.

Greece, France, Portugal and Spain are switching off the checks when needed, according to the UK travel association Abta. The industry body suggested airports had staffed the border better and "improved the triaging of arrivals in some cases", which had avoided long queues.

Julia Lo Bue-Said, chief executive of the Advantage Travel Partnership, which represents independent British travel agents, said that the rollout of EES had "gone more smoothly than anticipated", although there were isolated hotspots of trouble across Europe, such as Lisbon, Tenerife and Milan. She added: "In the main the airports have been operating efficiently and the wait time to pass through border control has been better than many of us feared. It seems probable that the EU was well aware of the strong feeling that all airports needed to be properly resourced ahead of the main summer holiday period and acted accordingly."

Tim Alderslade, chief executive of the industry body Airlines UK, said that the flexibility should "continue throughout the summer and be extended beyond September to ensure passengers are not experiencing delays".

Victorian properties sold by peepshow

Kaya Burgess

"Property porn" TV programmes and websites have become a sensation for showcasing beautiful homes in exquisite detail, but historians have found that Victorian estate agents got there first by using painted peepshows to entice buyers.

Described as "the world's first version of Rightmove", coming more than 160 years before the birth of property websites offering video walkthroughs and wide-angle panoramas, a high-end estate agent in the 1830s found a way to give customers an immersive view of their most lavish homes at a time when photography was in its infancy.

Researchers from the University of Exeter have found that a 19th century estate agent called Brooks and Green, based on Old Bond Street in London, used a format called the cosmorama.

In these peepshow-style installations, large paintings were hidden behind walls and had to be viewed through convex lenses. In combination with specially designed lighting, this gave the images a depth that made them lifelike and meant the viewer felt like they were immersed in the scene.

They were particularly popular when used to depict landscapes and cities from far-flung parts of the world, giving people a glimpse of exotic and beautiful lands. They often appeared in department stores and toured the country in travelling shows.

The research, published in the journal Early Popular Visual Culture, forms part of a European study led by Lusofona University in Lisbon called Curiositas: Peeping Before Virtual Reality, which charts the history of immersive, virtual reality-style media.

"The cosmorama offered picture galleries for the people, tapping into an era of greater travel and offering views of international tourist sites and scenes from across the British Empire," said Professor John Plunkett, an expert in Victorian visual media at Exeter.

"What we've discovered through this latest research project, however, is that its use extended beyond simple entertainment. The appeal of cosmoramas was that they sold an experience of virtual travel. This was used by estate agents seeking to sell luxury properties and country estates."

Researchers found evidence of more than 650 cosmoramas from around the world, writing: "Advertisements in London newspapers in the late 1830s revealed that auctioneer and surveyor Brooks and Hedger — later, Brooks and Green — on Old Bond Street, close to the Cosmorama Rooms of Regent Street, were offering cosmoramic views of some of the properties and estates they were selling."

There are numerous examples in The Times's archives of such adverts, with one placed by Brooks and Green on June 15, 1842, offering for sale a "delightfully situate [sic] cottage residence called the Ray" and inviting interested parties to their gallery where "a cosmoramic view and plan of the estate may be seen".

Written descriptions would "fail to assist the imagination to any thing like the same extent as these pictorial representations", the Brooks and Green advertisement added.

It would have been a labour-intensive process, with artists required to spend considerable time at the properties to produce the images.

"In contemporary life, prospective purchasers of real estate are usually aided by a full suite of photographs and floor plans, and often an online video walkthrough," Plunkett said.

"Nineteenth-century buyers had no such advantages. We can see how Brooks and Green pioneered the virtual tour, over 150 years before digital technology would fully realise this potential."

Burke's reign as queen of funk lacks a little soul

Theatre Clive Davis

I'm Every Woman
160min
Troubadour Wembley Park Theatre
★★★☆☆

Who's next for the musical theatre treatment? The ghost of Michael Jackson has already conquered the West End, and Frank Sinatra has joined the biodrama stakes in a jukebox show at the Aldwych which dutifully sifts through the first phase of his career, often throwing songs in at random. Now, in *I'm Every Woman, X Factor* winner Alexandra Burke portrays "Queen of Funk" Chaka Khan, a soulful performer whose tally of chart hits doesn't quite do justice to her talent.

What a curious evening it turns out to be. Having fought our way through the scrum outside the Troubadour Wembley Park, a functional venue with a touch of Ikea about it, we then had to endure a delay of around 30 minutes before Khan and her entourage made their entry into their seats in the stalls and the show began. Racky Plews, the direc tor, oversees a production embellished with striking period detail (dig those funky Seventies Afros) but undermined by a script by Nia T Hill which drifts from one stilted scene to another. For much of the time, Khan seems a bystander in her own life, content to be overshadowed by facsimiles of VIPs from Stevie Wonder to Prince and Miles Davis.

HARA KAUR/GETTY IMAGES

Alexandra Burke was joined on stage by the real Chaka Khan on Tuesday evening at the Troubadour Wembley Park

The episodes slip past at a bewildering pace. One minute Khan is just an aspiring singer, the next she is hanging out with Joni Mitchell (Sophie Earl delivers a fine version of *Big Yellow Taxi*). At the very beginning, we see young, Chicago-born Yvette Marie Stevens trying to cope with her father's heroin addiction. Soon she gravitates towards an Afrocentric cultural centre where she acquires her new first name before embarking on a marriage to Hassan Khan (Jelani Munroe), a member of the Black Panther Party.

He turns out to be a disappointment, as does hedonistic husband No 2, Richard (Miles Anthony Daley). Life turns sour; arguments descend into violence. If there's one constant in Khan's existence, apart from her passion for music, it's her reliance on drugs. When she encounters jazz legend Miles — Teddy Wills is required to play him as little more than a manic, streetwise dandy — he is quick to open up his own private pharmacy.

Still, the music lifts the spirits. Burke is in commanding form on the vocals, and the songs from Khan's years with funk band Rufus still shimmer. Sara Perks's set designs are bright and evocative. It's just a pity that, much of the time, Chaka seems to be a guest at her own party.

To Sept 27, imeverywomanthemusical.com

Pigsty whisky stash worth £750,000

Herbie Russell

A retired farmer is selling one of Britain's largest whisky collections for £750,000 after storing it in a pigsty.

Bill Garratt, 81, has amassed more than 5,000 bottles over the last four decades, some dating to the 19th century, along with thousands of pieces of Scotch-related memorabilia.

The pensioner's collection is so vast that he was forced to convert a 100ft-long pigsty into a storehouse after his wife became "fed up" with what was then 1,000 bottles cluttering the house.

The stockpile includes 1,800 single malts, 1,800 miniature bottles and about 500 blends, with some individual bottles worth more than £6,000.

The grandfather, from Ravensden in Bedfordshire, said that he "stumbled into" his hobby after a friend gave him a bottle of Jolly Runner in 1982.

"I've seen more expensive collections but I haven't seen a bigger collection. It could be one of the most diverse collections," he said.

The most expensive bottle is a £6,000 Macallan Magnifico, which he believes could be worth much more today. Other highlights include Macallan 26 fluid ounce bottles from 1937 and 1938, which can fetch up to £6,000 each. The oldest is a Choice Old Scotch Whisky produced by R Thorne and Sons Limited in 1894. There is also a Hanyu The Joker single malt worth about £5,000, a Macallan Diamond Jubilee special edition valued at up to £6,000 and a teardrop-shaped Mortlach 70 by Gordon and MacPhail.

Garratt, who enjoys a dram three times a week, said: "I like Macallan, especially the 18-year-old and up bottles, but The Lakes Distillery whisky and The English Distillery, Norfolk, are two good options for those looking to get into whisky. Highland Park offers some great choices, too. I've been to Scotland quite a bit. One time I flew up to Scotland and I brought back 34 bottles."

He estimates that the assortment also contains about 1,800 pieces of memorabilia including Johnnie Walker figures, ashtrays, pictures, paintings, boxes and glasses.

Mark Littler, who is handling the sale, said: "Most whisky collections are built around single malts. Bill's collection is different: it tells the story of Scotch whisky itself. He has collected its entire history, rather than only its most fashionable names."

Disney strikes deal to let characters loose on TikTok

Amelia Stout

Darth Vader, Spider-Man and Buzz Lightyear are to become TikTok stars after Walt Disney struck a "first of its kind" deal with the online platform.

A select group of creators will be given access to a library of characters, scenes and other material from franchises such as Star Wars, Toy Story and the Marvel Universe. The scheme will be introduced in the United States in the coming months before being extended to other countries. Content will appear on TikTok and on Disney+ Verts, a vertical-video feed built into the Disney+ streaming platform.

The deal, financial details of which have not been disclosed, marks a departure from Disney's tight protection of its intellectual property as it embraces fan-made content to market new releases. Matt Navarra, a social media expert, told the BBC: "Disney owns some of the world's biggest franchises but ownership of attention is shifting towards creators. Hollywood used to market at fans. Now it needs to give fans the raw materials to market with it, and that is quite a profound shift."

Navarra added that TikTok's algorithm gave it the power to influence which character or franchise "suddenly becomes very valuable again".

Toy Story comes to Disney's rescue, Business, page 37

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Why are young women using walking sticks?
Kathleen Stock
Page 23

Comment

Chinese money still has universities in thrall

Despite warnings that Beijing is a 'genuine and increasing cyber risk', British science's love affair with China continues

Juliet Samuel

@CITYSAMUEL

You can see how it happens. One minute you're running a little side hustle to attract fee-paying "engineering and management" students; the next you've got scientists on the roster doing research for Chinese defence companies.

The partnership between Queen Mary University of London and Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT), an institution closely linked to the Chinese military, is now in its 23rd year. It operates a joint campus in China, offers joint degrees and fosters research collaborations. But nearly 10,000 students and 500 research papers later, with topics ranging from 6G to satellite systems and drone networks, you'd think someone might ask: "Is this a good idea?"

Queen Mary's does not appear to have mulled over the matter. Perhaps it's so ideologically committed to doing science with anyone that the details don't matter — or making too much money to care. A spokesperson said it was "proud" of the partnership and that it is "in full alignment with UK government legislation and subject to rigorous procedures, policies and regulations". This attitude is not unusual.

According to research by the charity UK-China Transparency (UKCT), Beijing lists 19 British universities as being foreign "partners" to the eight universities in China known for their deep links to its military and defence establishment. Not even Russia comes close: it has just ten such partnerships.

This tells us, yet again, that Britain is still by far China's favourite foreign destination for academic collaboration designed to further its defence interests. Yet as other free countries crack down on these links, Britain is becoming even more of an outlier.

Our allies have severely restricted permissions and funding for partnerships with the eight Chinese universities, such as BUPT, that enjoy Level 1 security clearance from Beijing, meaning they can work on top-secret defence projects. The US placed all eight on an entity list requiring explicit permission in 2020. Canada restricts funding for any project involving them and other Chinese, military-linked institutions. Japan restricts partnerships with at least three of them. Taiwan has banned joint research and exchanges with seven of them, and the EU has excluded the same seven from parts of the Horizon funding programme.

> Hostile state actors are targeting universities to steal personal data

But in Britain, the government is terrified of naming the devil in such a straightforward way. We're told the security services have stepped up screening but there is no list of high-risk entities. In the absence of strong and explicit government policy, it's left to spooks to police hundreds of individual collaborations and educate academics on the quiet.

Our leaders are still stuck in the default mode of "openness", oblivious to the way predatory forces use this freedom. In China, there is an explicit policy of fusion between military and civic. But our ministries are so reluctant to draw up lists of dangerous foreign players that they effectively invite them in to exploit British science and technology.

So we play a haphazard game of whack-a-mole, where only the most brazen moles are spotted and most of those survive their whacking. Over the years, I and others have written about mind-boggling collaborations between British and Chinese laboratories: a ballistics expert teaching in Britain while affiliated with a Chinese defence laboratory; British professors taking up funding and jobs at China's nuclear weapons development institute; and British researchers co-authoring papers with Chinese peers at military-linked universities on drone swarms, batteries, supercomputing, satellites, facial recognition and 5G.

From 2012 to 2017, laboratories funded by Chinese defence conglomerates were established at Imperial, Manchester, Birmingham, Strathclyde, Exeter, UCL and Nottingham. Those labs were eventually shut down, but in 2022 a Times investigation found that our universities had taken £240 million in Chinese funding, a quarter of it from sources sanctioned by the US.

Eventually, the security services were moved to speak. In 2019, GCHQ and MI5 warned that "hostile state actors are targeting UK universities to steal personal data, research data and intellectual property". Two years later it emerged that 200 British academics were under investigation for possible export control breaches (what came of that is unclear). The same year the head of MI6 warned of "large-scale [Chinese] espionage" in the UK. A year later, the head of MI5 said Chinese agents had approached more than 20,000 British targets.

Parliamentary committees took notice. The government (Tory throughout) claimed three times to be expanding screening: in 2020, again in 2022 and again in 2024. That year, Britain and the US blamed a Chinese state-affiliated group for a "prolific global hacking operation" that included the Electoral Commission, with the head of GCHQ calling China a "genuine and increasing cyber risk". Last year, three Chinese companies were blamed by the National Cyber Security Centre for a global hacking campaign targeting "critical sectors".

UNIVERSITY OF MACAU

Fang Binxing's university sends half its students studying abroad to the UK

After all of this, plus Covid, the lab leak cover-up, the supply chain embargoes, one might imagine that British science's love affair with China would have peaked. Well, after eight years of covering this topic even I was surprised to read, in the UKCT report, that partnerships between British and Chinese universities on cyber research — cybersecurity, computer science, electronics and so on — have actually accelerated. There are now 34 cyber-focused partnerships, ten of them established since 2024, including four with US-sanctioned universities. That compares to 48 across the entire EU.

BUPT, the partner to Queen Mary University, is a major player in Chinese cyber research and home to Fang Binxing, a chief architect of China's "Great Firewall". This university now sends nearly half of its students studying abroad to the UK. Another partnership, between the US-sanctioned Beijing Institute of Technology and Reading University, requires students on its informatics master's to complete modules on "Theory and Practice of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" and "Marxism and Social Science Methodology". A spokesperson for Reading said: "We have no concerns about the appropriateness of our double degree programmes in China."

> Surely we can rely on the consciences of the students to activate?

Does anyone? The government? The spooks? Why is this still going on? Surely we can rely on the consciences of the students to be activated? They'll scream and cry and camp out in protest at the mere rumour of a handshake with a western defence company, after all.

But the Chinese money spinner goes on and there's barely a whimper, as our universities do deals to further the interests of a regime that locks up and drugs petitioners, imprisons dissidents and has "re-educated" a million Uighurs. Is it sickness or insanity? Ignorance or cynicism? Or is it all just a case of Science with Perfidious Characteristics?

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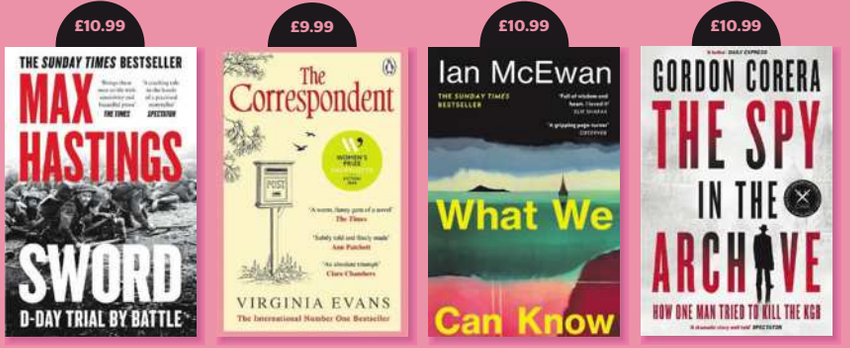

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Comment

Arday affair is an own goal for Cambridge

Hardline pursuit of diversity leaves the university looking as if it is subverting excellence

Roger Mosey

Cambridge in this hot and arid summer is a university divided. The Jason Arday affair, in which a young black professor has been accused of plagiarism and making up some of the events in his life, has revealed to the outside world a fault line apparent to insiders for some years. On one side are advocates of social justice who have encouraged the university to lead the way in challenging the prejudices lurking in academia and wider society; and on the other are usually quieter academics, fired up by recent events, who fear this has led to the compromising of standards and allowing identitarian politics to dictate policy.

As someone who arrived in Cambridge in 2013, it was plain there was a problem. The student body was disproportionately white compared with modern Britain; and the senior leadership of the university was even more unrepresentative. I had no hesitation, when asked, in joining the university's equality, diversity and inclusion committee. And thanks to a collective effort by the colleges and the central administration, Cambridge has made enormous progress. The most recent admissions statistics show 35 per cent of new undergraduates came from ethnic minorities. My own college trebled its minority representation in a decade while moving up the academic league tables. The tiresome claim that diversity means dumbing down is false.

But it was tougher at the senior level. A university with a predominantly white history cannot produce its own black professors at the drop of a hat, and it was reasonable for Cambridge to look for recruits around Britain and across the world. Where it hit controversy was alighting on Arday. His academic track record was unconventional for a Cambridge professor: an undergraduate degree in education studies with physical education, and later a PhD (which he acknowledged was poorly supervised) at Liverpool John Moores University.

> That's the language of Nigel Farage, scolded one white woman

What made him a compelling candidate, seemingly, was his life story: autism rendered him non-verbal until the age of 11, he said, and he was unable to read until he was 18. But when other elements of this story seemed to unravel — his charity fundraising record, his claimed relationships with other universities, inaccurate memories about taking part in TV programmes as a child — the whole rationale was thrown into question.

Arday denies the main allegations against him and his advocates are mostly sticking by him, but a number of Cambridge academics I've spoken to have no sympathy. Some want there to be an investigation under the university's "research integrity statement" to look at the issues around Arday's work. They're also bothered about the methods used in his specialist area, the sociology of education, with a particular emphasis on racial disadvantage.

One observer believes research built around small groups of interviewees can lead to academics "interviewing people who will agree with them"; and an underpinning of ideology, most notably the contentious critical race theory, can make it resistant to challenge. A black scholar remarks that there are hundreds of leading academics from diverse backgrounds around the world who could have been recruited by Cambridge in fields such as physics or history without controversy; but it looked, instead, as if the university had been indulging in "social-justice nepotism".

There are echoes in what I experienced in dealing with some of the beliefs of the harder-line diversity campaigners. The student body has been transformed: the number of non-white UK students admitted for medicine in recent years was 66 per cent; for economics it was 58 per cent. I'm sure they will do Cambridge proud. But what this should prompt, I argued in one committee, was a focus on who now is missing out in admissions — and that seemed to be the young white working class, and especially boys. "That is the language of Farage," scolded one white woman. But surely the best way of playing into Nigel Farage's hands is to make it look as if Cambridge doesn't give two hoots about deprived areas of England away from the big cities.

Any challenge to EDI orthodoxy gets a similar response. I spoke to a doctoral student who told me he felt pressured to nod towards critical race theory even though it was neither relevant to his thesis nor, in his view, a helpful framework. The university diversity network shared research that suggested unconscious bias training might be counterproductive, but leading figures shot down the idea of change because it would be "a retreat from EDI". After many organisations abandoned their membership of Stonewall, it was Cambridge — under pressure from staff lobby groups and despite the opposition of most college heads — which bucked the trend by rejoining.

The Arday affair has the potential to be more divisive still for the university. But if there is a lesson it could be this: equality, diversity and inclusion are goals for a leading global university to which most reasonable people would sign up. It is when they are baked into inflexible policies and questionable appointment processes that they become contentious and risk subverting rather than supporting excellence.

Most of all, there should be an open and vigorous debate about the next steps. I am struck by how many Cambridge people have legitimate views on these topics yet do not feel they can express them publicly. Now they must be allowed their voice.

Roger Mosey was master of Selwyn College, Cambridge, 2013-25

Janice Turner Notebook

Beach fire insanity as the heath blazed

The wind changed in the night and I was woken at 3am by smoke. The sky on Aldeburgh's northern horizon had been bruised all day by the wildfire four miles away on Dunwich Heath. But now you could smell the burning and my lizard brain wouldn't let me go back to sleep.

I live for summer: I'll take heatwaves over washed-out Julys. But the next morning felt eerie and ominous. Just beyond Sizewell's white orb, animals were fleeing, birds incinerated, mature trees lost on that mysterious scrubland which overlooks the sea where a medieval city drowned. Firefighters had worked all night but still it burnt.

On my morning run along the beach to Thorpeness, the vegetated shingle, typically dark green, was parched and pale. Just one stray fag butt, I thought, and whoomph!

Then I saw two campers rolling up a tent beside a pile of driftwood and dead roots. Nearby was a mound of warm ashes. Is that yours? "Yeah." You know there's a massive wildfire up the coast? Gormless look. "No, we're from Scotland." They were young, probably on their phones all the damn day and if I'd smelt Dunwich burning, they surely had.

Should I call the police, if only to scare them? They were packing their car. They'd be gone, the selfish morons, off to set a fire somewhere else.

Youthful errors

The core principle of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 is that a criminal should not be punished for ever. Kemi Badenoch is right to note that Joshua Bonehill-Paine was in his early twenties when he conducted a vile campaign of antisemitic, misogynist harassment against the MP Luciana Berger which landed him in prison.

Young people have the plasticity to change. The writer Ed Husain, a teenage supporter of Hizb ut-Tahrir, became a prominent critic of Islamic extremism. Bonehill-Paine says he has de-radicalised from Nazi sympathiser to holding views somewhere between the Tories and Reform.

But it's a big leap between being allowed to write, speak or hold down a job and stand for public office. Some professions are held to higher standards. Solicitors have noted that a youthful dishonesty conviction such as Louise Haigh's would have precluded them from ever practising law. And even if Bonehill-Paine only wanted to be a local councillor, dealing with "parking and putting out bins", as Badenoch put it, his vicious crimes can't be shrugged away.

He's only 34. After standing down, he can now spend a few more years proving he's a reformed character.

Bragging rights

I was raised not to bang my own drum and am quite allergic to the boastfulness of others. (Is writing that boastful? I hope not.) Jason Arday's autobiography is full of quotes from those who divine he is an exceptional person with remarkable talents and a "good heart" who will go on to do extraordinary deeds.

But more prosaically I hear politicians say things of themselves that should always be left to others. When he resigned as prime minster, Sir Keir Starmer said: "I do so with good grace". Grace, like dancing, is a performance for us to judge. And when Natalie Fleet resigned as safeguarding minister she said it was the "bravest thing I've ever done". No doubt it was the toughest, but bravery is a quality others bestow, not a medal you pin on yourself.

United front

I've seen only two episodes of *Kabul* (BBC iPlayer), a drama about the 2021 departure of Nato forces from Afghanistan, but so far it is gripping. Outside foreign embassies, endangered locals — women prosecutors, anti-Taliban forces and interpreters — fight to be allowed to leave. Some choose to stay, and you feel it won't end well for the idealistic female doctor or her little-girl patient.

This is a French/German/Italian co-production yet oddly all the European characters speak English, even among themselves. (The Afghans speak Pashto.) And all nationalities are united in trying to get one over the arrogant Americans.

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THUNDERER

Hackney Greens should visit Haifa, not judge from afar

Yona Yahav

The Green leadership of Hackney council wants to end its twinning agreement with Haifa after nearly six decades. The announcement was accompanied by grave accusations against the state of Israel and portrayed Haifa as a city that no longer reflects the values Hackney seeks to uphold.

At a time when facts are so easily replaced by slogans, and complexity reduced to soundbites, it is important to pause and consider the reality. Haifa is an exceptional model of coexistence in the Middle East. For more than a century, Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze and Bahá'ís have lived alongside one another here, not as an abstract ideal but as a way of life.

They study in the same schools and universities. They care for one another in our hospitals, work side by side, establish businesses together, meet in the same cafés and restaurants, and co-operate in local government and community life.

As in every democratic society, we experience arguments and differences of opinion. But we believe the way to address them is not by severing ties or singling out entire communities. It is through dialogue, familiarity and working together. Precisely because our region is so complex, we have learnt that coexistence is built through small decisions made every day: to respect, to listen, to co-operate and to see the person standing before you.

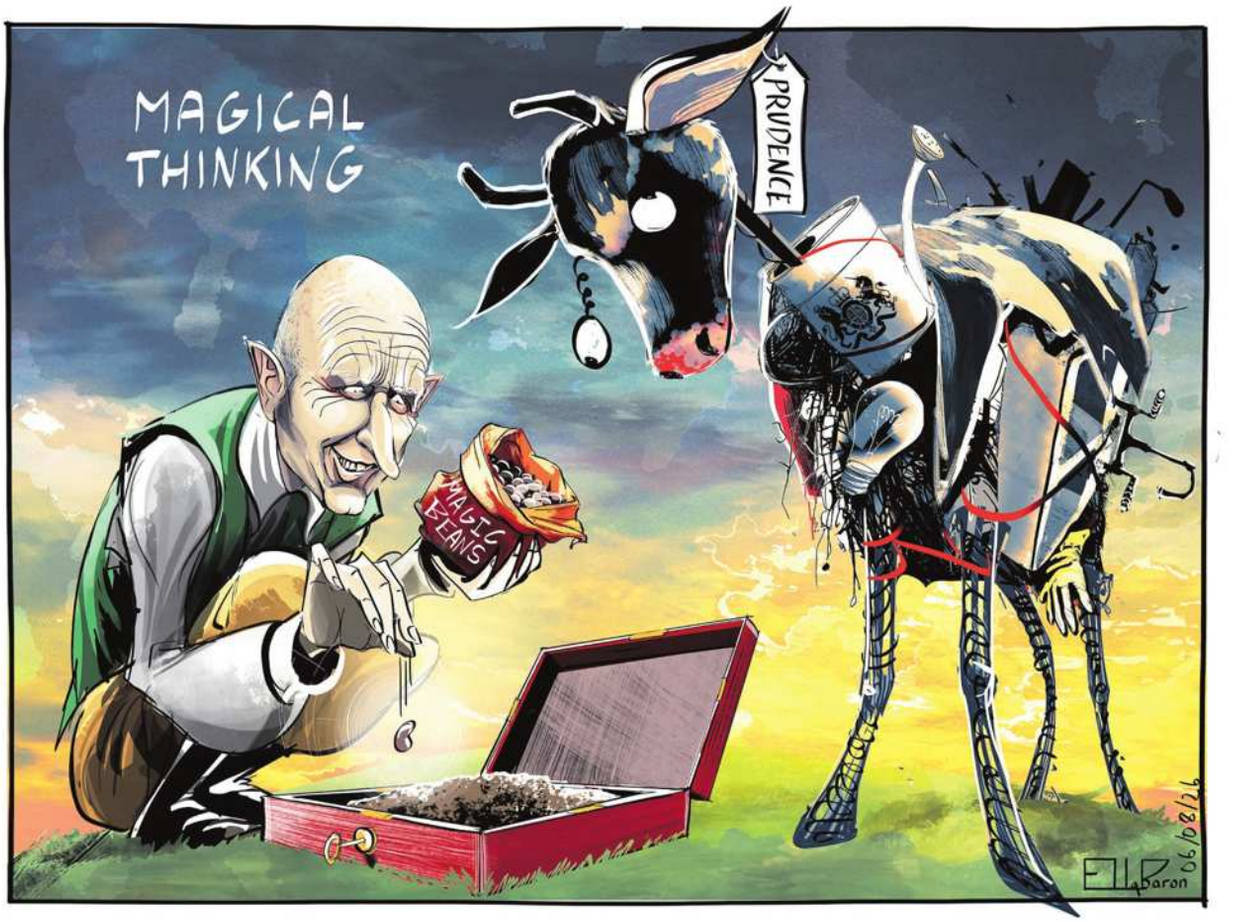
About 20 per cent of our residents are Arab, both Christian and Muslim, and they are represented at every level of local government. Jewish pupils in Haifa learn spoken Arabic because I believe language is one of the most important bridges between people. We honour Arab cultural figures by naming public sites and streets after them.

Haifa is not isolated from the painful reality of the region. On October 7, 2023, Israel suffered one of the most devastating terrorist attacks, and the worst massacre, in its history. Families from every part of Israeli society paid a terrible price. This is why we must distinguish between political disagreement and the delegitimisation of an entire society.

My message to the British public, and particularly the residents of Hackney, is simple. Do not judge Haifa through headlines, slogans or political resolutions. Come and visit us and walk throughout our neighbourhoods. Speak to those of all faiths who share this city and call it home.

And thus, I invite Zoë Garbett, the mayor of Hackney, to come and to look for herself. The world does not need more cities severing ties with one another. It needs more cities that choose, every day, to bring people together. This is Haifa.

Yona Yahav is mayor of Haifa



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Why are young women using walking sticks?

A disproportionate number of Gen Z females are affected by vague syndromes and may be victims of social contagion

Kathleen Stock

In 19th-century Paris, walking with a cane was a symbol of the dandyish flâneur, strolling elegantly around the city with an ironically arched eyebrow. In 21st-century Britain, canes are the unironic preserve of vulnerable looking girls. Sometimes you see groups of them, each leaning on a walking stick as they edge gingerly along. Startlingly fresh-faced users have been visible at Pride parades for a while, and there are growing numbers on university campuses. The message sent to onlookers is about a life spent in pain; though what kind of pain, exactly, remains unclear.

TikTok has hundreds of videos on the subject: how to match your stick to your outfit, how to dance with a cane, how mobility aids can still look hot. And the trend is not just for walking aids.

This week a video went viral of a young woman in a wheelchair at a train station, filming the laborious attempts of staff to get her chair up some stairs after the lift failed. Towards the end of the video, somewhat unexpectedly, she gets out of her chair and walks upstairs herself, saying she "had a bit of energy that day" so could do it. In another video, she films herself putting on roller skates before pushing off from her wheelchair and skating happily away, Lazarus-like.

Even severely debilitating physical conditions produce good days as well as bad. On some bad days, a person may need extra help. But when a disproportionate number of young women are insisting this applies, we need to find out what is going on. Why do Gen Z females, apparently unlike every generation before them, have strangely unstable bodies that intermittently require support?

When you dig into their explanations, a few officially medical-sounding words tend to recur: postural tachycardia, joint hypermobility, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue. What these syndromes all share is a set of non-specific symptoms, versions of which are familiar to all of us: dizziness, a racing heart, exhaustion, brain fog, muscle pain.

> Many symptoms are of anxiety, the defining emotion of teenagers

And of course, many of these are also symptoms of anxiety, the defining emotion of teenage years. Saying this doesn't indicate that the syndromes in question don't exist, but only that it can be unclear whether you really have one.

Could it be, then, that some are taking a cue from internet influencers, overanalysing normal experiences and talking themselves into a disabled state? If true, it would hardly be the first time that young women were in the grip of social contagion — indeed, they are famously good at it.

In her 2017 book *How Emotions Are Made*, the psychologist Lisa Feldman Barrett argues that emotions are a form of prediction, with the mind trying to decipher bodily feelings according to scripts learnt from the past. She starts with a vivid example of her own. As a young woman on a first date, her stomach started to flutter and she couldn't concentrate. Soon afterwards she threw up, and realised that what she had assumed were emerging feelings of lust was actually a stomach bug.

What was true of the author then is true of all of us. Our inner sensations don't come with labels attached but require mental interpretation, which is why cultures differ in their emotional ranges. Humans gradually learn the meaning of their feelings from society around them.

The old-fashioned repressed British script, still beloved of many middle-aged men, said: "Just ignore the painful twinge or weird sensation and it will go away." Some are so adept at this they literally don't notice injuries or signs of illness.

These days, the medical profession encourages us to take our physical experiences seriously in case some disease or other can be caught in time. But in certain subcultures, young people are being told that unpleasant feelings should be focused on more than anything else.

> We owe it to young people to challenge neuroticism and fear

These feelings may be frightening; but they also make you different, special, excused from the pressures of life, pleasingly fussed over by strangers. And if a person then spends a lot of time sitting or lying down, she will naturally become unfit, so that the next time she stands up or walks any distance she will feel even worse; and the cycle of confused self-interpretation will continue.

To point this possibility out tends to produce anger in those affected or those that care for them. Arguing that certain kinds of disability are socially created, particularly in females, looks at odds with the dictum that young women with chronic illnesses tend to be disbelieved by doctors, and that this is a very bad thing.

When talking about trends across huge populations, though, both things can be true — indeed, they might even be connected. And in the socially constructed case, we are still talking about illness rather than deliberate feigning. It's just that the source of illness is, in part, a story the sufferer has unconsciously learnt. And this is very good news. For unlike biologically fixed disorders, stories can be changed for the better, and happier endings produced for the sufferers concerned.

Rather than it being cruel to say this, in fact, it is cruel not to. We owe it to potentially able-bodied young people to challenge their tendencies to neuroticism and fear; to get them out into the world as functioning adults, wherever that is possible. For their sake, we need to help them ditch the props, and — quite literally — to stand on their own two feet.

Kathleen Stock is a contributing editor at UnHerd

Hugo Rifkind is away

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@thetimes.co.uk or by post to 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Care home crisis

Sir, I am a trustee of a charity that runs 15 care facilities. We are interested in buying other care homes and have had discussions on taking over homes being closed by local authorities. However, we cannot possibly run them without losing a great deal of money. The problem is that the cost of staff is so much higher than our own staff costs, particularly the very expensive inflation-proofed pensions. The charity takes in both privately funded residents and publicly funded residents. Like many other care homes, we make a loss on the publicly funded residents and subsidise them with the fees from the privately funded residents.

It is not difficult to conclude that local authorities close their homes because it is so much cheaper to sub-contract the cost of care. In addition, they avoid bad publicity if something goes wrong with the care.

Ian Hepworth
Ilkley, W Yorks

Navy's drone boats

Sir, There is no doubt that drones and unmanned vehicles will be crucially important in any future armed conflict and that the Royal Navy needs them ("Made in Britain: Ukrainian drone boats", Aug 5). I remain to be convinced that in events short of "hot war" whether they are able to rescue seafarers in distress, firefight on ships requiring assistance, search for drugs/contraband/victims of slavery in merchant ships, assist with disaster relief, check the size of fishermen's nets, have unrestricted passage through other nations' waters, establish a presence and a myriad of other tasks performed over centuries by Royal Navy warships.

Admiral Lord West of Spithead
House of Lords

Wedgwood history

Sir, It is unwarranted to castigate the role of Arthur Bryan in the demise of Wedgwood (letter, Aug 5). Further, AN Wilson's assertion (comment, Aug 1) that Bryan was responsible for the decision to take Wedgwood public is incorrect: it was the insistence of the Wedgwood family to cash in their shareholdings. Bryan was a marketing visionary and propelled Wedgwood's global success. Far from asset-stripping the acquisitions, he provided significant investments in every one of them to support their development. His strategy was very successful until the circumstances of cheaper imports came to bear.

Christopher Johnson
Wedgwood manufacturing director 1975 to 2002; Shrewsbury

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Britain's lack of support for wealth creation

Sir, James Kanagasooriam (comment, Aug 5) is right to argue that Britain's problem is not simply one of inequality but of wealth creation. Increasingly, we appear to resent those who succeed while paying insufficient attention to the conditions that allow more people to succeed in the first place.

The irony is that the very people most willing to applaud the departure of high earners are often the same people demanding better public services. Yet those services depend disproportionately on a relatively small number of taxpayers.

If Britain becomes progressively less attractive to entrepreneurs, investors and highly skilled professionals, there will be fewer businesses to employ people, fewer innovations to improve productivity and a smaller tax base to fund the NHS, education and social care.

The public's frustration is understandable where wealth has been accumulated through extracting value rather than creating it. The owner who builds a successful engineering firm, software company or manufacturing business enriches not only themselves but also employees, suppliers, pension funds and the Treasury. A society that ceases to admire productive success will eventually produce less of it.

Tim Williams
Aberdeen

Sir, Your leading article is right that Labour risks treating profit itself as the villain ("Labour's Dirty Word", Aug 5). But why pick supermarkets and petrol stations? These are the easy cases. They are competitive markets, with thin margins, and rivals keeping everyone honest. I've spent 30 years running fare and ticketing systems across rail and London transport, both public and private. The harder case is the one that actually explains why the public doesn't trust profit — where competition is weak or absent, or where there is no day-to-day rival for customers to switch to: utilities, rail, the contracted edges of the public sector. There the question isn't public versus private, it's earned versus extracted profit. Profit from genuine efficiency, investment or risk, while delivering to a contracted standard, deserves celebrating, whoever earns it. Profit paid out while assets are run down or standards missed is something else entirely. Neither free-market nor anti-market rhetoric should be allowed to blur the two.

The chant in Orwell's *Animal Farm* started as "four legs good, two legs bad" and ended as a reason to stop checking either. Britain has done the same with "public good, private bad". Labour should drop it.

Antony Lain
Former CEO, TranSys/Oyster joint venture for Transport for London; former CEO, National Rail ticketing and systems; London NW5

Sir, A wealth tax would introduce an additional unfairness between the pensions of public and private sector employees. Many private sector employees have saved into Isas and self-invested pension plans, and when they retire they live off the income from these portfolios during their old age. These portfolios look like "wealth" to HMRC and are an easy target to tax. A public sector employee, whose inflation-linked pension would cost many hundreds of thousands of pounds if purchased as an annuity, has no such visible "wealth" of this type and would not suffer from a wealth tax.

Richard Tweed FCA
Croydon

Message of Ceuta

Sir, Further to William Hague's column on the implications of the mass border crossing at Ceuta, the real solution lies in addressing the underlying causes of migration at source ("Ceuta is a warning the West cannot ignore", Aug 4). Most migrants, like most people, would rather make a life at home, but a combination of climate change-induced drought, high population growth and conflict makes them despair of being able to do so. The best solution, therefore, is to address those problems in, or near, their home countries by creating and sustaining employment opportunities and investing in local infrastructure.

Compassion and self-interest point in the same direction, but no one country can make a difference on its own. Hence the West needs to act collectively, urgently and with a clear focus that recognises that the best defence against illegal migration is not rhetoric or photocalls at Dover but a helping hand to make it easier for people to stay at home.

Tom Kelly
Prime minister's official spokesman 2001-07; Coleraine, Northern Ireland

Autism definition

Sir, As a retired head teacher of a special residential/day school for pupils with a diagnosis of autism (the majority of whom required lifelong care), I totally agree with Professor Dame Uta Frith's comments ("Diagnosis of autism 'is so wide it risks being useless'", Aug 4). One of the many consequences of a "catch-all" diagnosis is that valuable resources are being diverted away from children and adults who require lifelong care. The definition of autism must be divided into clearer groups. This would be beneficial to all those who are at present defined as being on the autistic spectrum.

Brian Brayford
Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan

Education debate

Sir, I agree with Dave Halliwell (letter, Aug 4) that a missing piece of the jigsaw in the Michael Gove versus Lucy Powell debate on improving education is parenting. However, the final missing piece is surely truancy. To avoid a life of crime or one stuck on benefits, the young need more education, not less. Numeracy and literacy should be tackled head on. There must be harsh penalties for school non-attendance and tailored programmes for failing children, if necessary from the age of four. This country offers a free first-class education to every child. They should be encouraged to use it.

Julia Jeffries
Hartfield, E Sussex

Middlesbrough man

Sir, The one-off that was Rod Liddle was well captured in your obituary, Fraser Nelson's appreciation and your quotes from others who worked with him (Aug 4; letter, Aug 5). But an element of his writing that could easily be forgotten was his observations on Middlesbrough, Saltburn, Redcar and that area generally. As one who, through marriage, became very familiar with Middlesbrough, I have long known it as one of Britain's most overlooked towns. Rod helped to redress that. His efforts will be missed.

Professor Sir Roger Williams
Caversham, Reading

THROUGH THE EYE OF A GLOW-WORM

FROM THE TIMES AUGUST 6, 1926

The various sections of the British Association settled down yesterday to their respective tasks, and a busy day's programme included the addresses of six sectional presidents.

The Prince of Wales made a tour of a number of the sections. He visited the Geographical Section just in time to hear the presidential address delivered by Mr Ormsby-Gore, and he spent half an hour in the Forestry Section.

In the Section of Anthropology one of the most interesting topics was the skull of Neanderthal type found by Miss DAE Garrod on a site at Gibraltar, which was originally discovered in 1917 by the Abbé Breuil.

In the section of Chemistry an account of an examination of an ancient Egyptian cosmetic was contained in a paper prepared by Mr A Chaston Chapman and Dr H Plenderleith. It was stated that the discovery by Dr Howard Carter of a sealed cosmetic jar of calcite in the tomb of Tutankhamen at Luxor presented a unique opportunity for examining an ancient fatty substance which had not entirely decomposed.

The wastage that occurs owing to defective knowledge of the conditions affecting the quality of fruit carried in refrigerating chambers on board ship, and the attempts which are being made to solve the problems involved, formed the subject of a joint contribution to the Section of Engineering by Dr Ezer Griffiths and Mr Edgar A Griffiths.

Dr H Eltringham, in the Zoology Section, exhibited a unique photograph, which was taken by using the eye of a glow-worm instead of the ordinary lens of a camera. The projection on the screen proved to be a fairly clear and easily recognizable portrait.

"Our Coming Total Eclipse" was the title of a paper read by Professor HH Turner before the members of the Mathematics and Physics Section. He said that Spain had total eclipses in 1900 and 1905, and England had total eclipses in 1715 and 1724, but for 200 years we had not again been favoured, nor should we be favoured (after next year) for another 200 years at least. But on June 29, 1927, a total eclipse track would cross England from Southport to West Hartlepool; and those who stationed themselves on that line would see the sun totally eclipsed soon after his rising.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

The dying art of conversation

Sir, It's terrifying just how accurate James Marriott's piece is on the dying art of conversation ("In the silence, you can hear society crumble", Aug 4; letter, Aug 5). Something that he doesn't specifically mention is the extent to which our lack of chit-chat is affecting relationships across different generations. Conversation still exists, but it's increasingly being confined within the boundaries of our social circles. Young people like me are engaging in fewer conversations with their elders — and vice versa. The result of this is the intensification of negative stereotypes around each generation, which in turn make it harder for those generations to converse. It's a sad reality and one that I hope many, like Marriott, will fight against, one Uber ride at a time.

Esme Gordon-Craig (age 24)
Tixall, Staffs

Sir, May I direct James Marriott to the No 58 bus that links Macclesfield to Buxton, especially on a Saturday? There the art of casual conversation is alive and well. The driver provides a running commentary on the traffic, the Saturday morning cyclists and notable gardens on the route. On the way up the hill all aboard discuss their plans for the day (shopping, "stag do" pub crawls, matinee performances at the Opera House, lunch). On the way home we all compare notes, purchases and the merits of the many cafés and real ale pubs. There is no silence!

Sue Jones
Macclesfield

Manual conversion

Sir, Helen Bell (letter, Aug 5) argues that a one-hour conversion course would not be enough to safely allow a driver with an automatic licence to drive a manual. The AA agrees. The one-hour course would be the assessment preceded by up to ten lessons. This works in Germany. At present 83 per cent of new cars sold are automatic, and the switch to electric and hybrid cars will increase this. With five-month waiting times to book a practical test, we believe this AA Driving School proposal will help those who may occasionally need to drive a manual car for work.

Edmund King
AA president

Hat trick

Sir, Like Giles Coren (Notebook, Aug 4), my husband likes a straw hat, but he makes his own from crocosmia, a common garden perennial. He picks the plant's leaves when they are green and pliable, and plaits and fashions them into a brimmed hat. The leaves then dry and fade. When he wears it, he looks not unlike Van Gogh's *Self-Portrait with a Straw Hat*.

Jane Smillie
Radyr, Cardiff

Welsh Star Wars

Sir, If it is proposed to reissue *Star Wars: A New Hope* in Welsh ("May the force be Cymru", Aug 5), should not the next episode be retitled *The Empire Strikes, Bach*?

Michael Hammerson
London N6

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime telephone number.

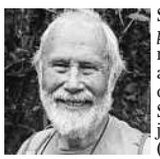
Daily Universal Register

Boris Johnson is a speaker at the Young America's Foundation's National Conservative Student Conference in Washington.

Nature notes

By and large the birds have fallen silent. A low profile is essential for them as they undergo a moult that can involve losing so many feathers that they can barely fly. This doesn't mean there is nothing to listen to. The dog days of summer are a great opportunity to enjoy grasshoppers. The three most common UK species are relatively easy to identify by ear. The field grasshopper, often found in parks and gardens, gives single staccato chirps. The meadow grasshopper is like a novice playing the maracas: you hear short bursts of rapid chirring. The common green grasshopper's song is a bicycle's back wheel ticking pleasantly: these calls generally last uninterrupted for 30 seconds and often far longer. JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today



Sir Chris Bonington, *pictured*, mountaineer, made the first British ascent of the North Wall of the Eiger (1962), 92; **Sir Jonathan Baker**, lord justice of appeal, 71; **Lord (Guy) Black of Brentwood**, media executive, deputy chairman, Telegraph Media Group, 62; **Sir Billy Boston**, rugby player, member of the team that won the 1960 rugby league World Cup, 92; **Sir Ian Cheshire**, chairman, Ofcom, Landsec and Spire Healthcare Group, 67; **Mary Davis**, chief executive, Special Olympics, 72; **Michael Deeley**, film producer, *Blade Runner* (1982), 94; **Bill Emmott**, editor-in-chief, The Economist (1993-2006), author, *Deterrence, Diplomacy and the Risk of Conflict over Taiwan* (2024), 70; **Romola Garai**, actress, *Becoming Elizabeth* (2022), 44; **Joe Glanfield**, sailor, two-time Olympic silver medallist, 47; **Lord (Andrew) Green of Deddington**, co-founder (2001) and president, MigrationWatch UK (think tank), 85; **Geri Halliwell-Horner**, singer, Spice Girls, *Wannabe* (1996), 54; **Prof Sir James Hough**, physicist, a leader in the field of gravitational wave physics, 81; **Conor McPherson**, playwright, *The Weir* (1997), and director, 55; **Kalidas Madhavpeddi**, chairman, Glencore, 71; **Richard Prince**, painter and photographer, 77; **Paul Roseby**, chief executive and artistic director, National Youth Theatre, and broadcaster, 60; **Chris Sherwood**, chief executive, National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, RSPCA (2018-25), 46; **M Night Shyamalan**, film director, *Trap* (2024), 56; **Mary Ann Sieghart**, writer and broadcaster, 65; **Robin van Persie**, footballer, Netherlands (2005-17), Manchester United (2012-15), 43; **Roger Weatherby**, chairman, Weatherbys Banking Group, senior steward, The Jockey Club (2014-19), 64; **Michelle Yeoh**, actress, *Everything Everywhere All at Once* (2023, best actress Oscar), 64.

On this day

In **1926** Gertrude "Trudy" Ederle, an US Olympic gold medallist, became the first woman to swim the Channel. Her time of 14 hours and 31 minutes was achieved in rough conditions and broke the men's record. After arriving near Dover, an immigration officer demanded to see her passport.

The last word

"The sea is as near as we come to another world." Anne Stevenson, poet and writer, *North Sea Off Carnoustie* (1977)

Borrowing Bonanza

Flexing fiscal rules to invest in infrastructure may have some merit. But any new borrowing is still borrowing and the UK's debt pile remains dangerously high

During Rishi Sunak's time as chancellor and later prime minister, the scale of the UK's debt pile was said to have kept him awake at night. He was worried, rightly, that the vast interest payments were stifling growth, limiting spending elsewhere, and risked spiralling out of control with even the slightest change to interest rates. After the pandemic, when borrowing rose by some £400 billion, debt came near to 100 per cent of GDP for the first time in decades. Hindsight is a wonderful thing, especially on the question of whether propping up swathes of the economy during the restrictions was the right thing to do. But there is no dispute that it left the UK's economy exposed.

In the present financial year, the debt interest bill is set to hit £112.8 billion — the second highest on record after Mr Sunak broke the record for the average annual debt payment. The cost of servicing this debt is vast, the equivalent of the budget of HS2 (even considering its vast cost overruns). Or it is equivalent, according to the TaxPayers' Alliance, to filling every pothole in England and Wales nearly six times over. Such is the scale of debt now that £1 in every dozen spent by the government goes on paying the interest. Debt has, however, begun to fall quickly and in the next budget on October 28, this trajectory must continue.

Instead of acknowledging the great cost of debt, John Healey is thinking about expanding it. As this newspaper reported yesterday, the chancellor is examining how to fiddle with his fiscal rules to raise an extra £9 billion a year by 2031 by reclassifying spending on infrastructure as "assets" that can be offset against borrowing. The same may be applied to equity in companies. This idea was explored by Rachel Reeves when as chancellor she considered channelling the funds through state institutions such as the National Wealth Fund and the British Business Bank. She did not last long enough to try it out.

Mr Healey has spoken of the need for flexibility within the fiscal constraints to borrow more. Lord O'Neill of Gatley, an informal economic adviser to the prime minister, is backing the plan. In the context of £113 billion of debt, an extra £9 billion is not a vast sum. And were it to be used to help fix the UK's ailing infrastructure — such as building reservoirs, improving the electricity grid and expanding road capacity — it could prove beneficial. But the notion that the government should be picking winners through equity in start-ups is less wise. Be it the DeLorean Motor Company or British Steel, experience suggests that such state interference probably does little good.

There is a simple truth, however, behind Mr Healey's idea: more borrowing, however it is dressed up, is still more borrowing. And more borrowing will mean more expensive interest payments. The same can be said of another new idea to introduce "war bonds" to fund higher defence spending. The ruse to offset new "assets" may allow the Burnham government to say it has not broken its fiscal rules. But the test will be whether it is accepted by the bond markets, which are carefully watching the government's actions — especially whether the chancellor maintains enough fiscal headroom to cope with any turbulence.

The Resolution Foundation, an economic think tank, has said the critical question for this plan is whether returns from extra spending will ultimately boost productivity. This is indeed the test. But a more important test is whether Mr Healey is prepared to trim back day-to-day spending. The chancellor has written to ministers to warn them that a bout of belt-tightening across Whitehall is approaching. The government must explain to the country that the state is doing too much. Whether it is the NHS, benefits or the state pension, spending is too high. For the UK to avoid fiscal disaster, it must be restrained if the debt pile is ever to shrink. Rising borrowing cannot continue indefinitely.

Dubious Don

Jason Arday's resignation leaves questions for Cambridge to answer

The unravelling of Jason Arday's career quickly took on bewildering proportions. A poster child for the voguish diversity, equity and inclusion agenda, Mr Arday was appointed to a prestigious sociology chair at Cambridge University in 2023 — the youngest black professor in the institution's history.

What made his meteoric rise all the more inspiring was Mr Arday's inauspicious back story: illiterate, he claims, until the age of 18, he came to elite academia by the roundabout route of an early career as a PE teacher.

In recent weeks, however, serious allegations came to light about the standing of Mr Arday's scholarship, including accusations that he plagiarised large parts of his PhD thesis and later published work and engaged in other forms of scholarly embellishment. Yesterday, he finally did the right thing and resigned.

Wider scrutiny did not do Mr Arday any favours. His remarkable life story, the subject of a forthcoming memoir, raised eyebrows. Mr Arday claims to have raised £5.5 million for charity — in one instance by running 300 miles in three days, a feat that would make him one of the world's most gifted long-distance athletes. The charity WaterAid, for which Mr Arday claims to have worked in west Africa, says it has no record of sending him, or any volunteers, abroad. Though tangential to professional malpractice, the accumulation of seemingly fantastical detail in Mr Arday's CV made for a concerning pattern.

The most serious questions concerned Mr Arday's academic integrity. Two institutions — Glasgow University and Ohio State University — where Mr Arday claimed to be a visiting professor now say they have no record of him.

References to an MA degree have also been scrubbed from his staff webpage. Examination of his published work reveals dozens of instances in which evidence is treated in a seemingly inconsistent or shoddy way.

Cambridge University, which belatedly launched an investigation, must get to the bottom of how Mr Arday was ever appointed to such a senior position in the first place. That includes his outrageous suggestion that the allegations against him were evidence of an "insidious and relentless strategy" to remove black academics "under the guise of academic integrity". On an impartial assessment of the mounting evidence, that conspiracist claim did not survive scrutiny. Yet, Cambridge indulged it.

The university has not handled this crisis deftly. Allegations that a star scholar has repeatedly engaged in such behaviours have done enormous damage to its reputation. Instead of treating them seriously in the first instance, Cambridge's reflexive response was to uncritically side with Mr Arday and bolster his baseless claim to being the victim of a journalistic "smear campaign".

The reality could not have been more different. It has emerged that a reporter at Times Higher Education, who was doing his professional duty in looking into anomalies in Mr Arday's CV, was subjected to a four-month police investigation for allegedly harassing him. Such action is a clear misuse of police time.

Cambridge University has much to explain. The damage it has done to other minorities, by promoting someone so seemingly unsuitable for a professorship, will be hard to repair.

Burnham on Leave

Do prime ministers' summer holidays reveal their politics and personalities?

The government will function normally while the new prime minister is away on holiday, Downing Street has solemnly announced. Of course it will. The fatuous reassurance is evidence not only of the assumption nowadays that all decisions must be personally taken by the PM and that the moment he steps out of No 10 — or, in this case, the Downing Street of the north — paralysis will follow. It also is an attempt to quell the carping of those who, for petty political motives, are eager to portray Andy Burnham as indolent for taking a holiday only two weeks into the job.

Everyone needs a break. But where and when prime ministers go to relax has become an issue freighted with symbolism. Some seemed patriotically reluctant to leave the country: Harold Wilson, eager to bolster his man-of-the people image, donned shorts and sandals on the beach of his beloved Scilly Isles. David Cameron often favoured Cornwall. Ted Heath captained Morning Cloud around Britain's wilder seas. And Boris Johnson hired a hide-away in Scotland — inevitably revealed by the paparazzi — before deciding the Costa del Sol was more fun.

Others, however, lived it up: Tony Blair in Sardinia or Barbados at the expense of Silvio Berlusconi and Sir Cliff Richard. Rishi Sunak felt at home in California. Theresa May, more modestly, was content to hike through Alpine pastures. But two prime ministers abhorred holidays. Gordon Brown, dourly dutiful, was persuaded once to go to Southwold, where he was spotted on the Suffolk beach in a formal jacket. He preferred to stay at No 10. And Margaret Thatcher, seeing holidays as a dereliction of duty, once booked a ten-day break in Corsica but came home after four, saying that she and Denis had "done" the island. Inevitably the analysts will be parsing Mr Burnham's still unknown destination for clues about Britain's future.

World

Democrats split after another win for populist left

United States
George Grylls Washington

A progressive who wants to introduce wealth taxes for billionaires and end US military aid to Israel has won the Michigan Senate primary in a sharp blow to the Democratic establishment.

Abdul el-Sayed, 41, defeated his opponent Haley Stevens in a rancorous battle between Democrat progressives and moderates to prove their electability in a key swing state.

Having secured the Democratic nomination, Sayed is aiming to become America's first Muslim senator, although first he must defeat the Republican candidate Mike Rogers in a midterm race that could decide whether the Democrats recapture the Senate.

His narrow win — securing 48.5 per cent of the vote compared with 47.5 per cent for Stevens — will worry the Democratic Party establishment and encourage progressives who believe a left-wing candidate such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez should run for president in 2028.

However, his victory was much closer than polls predicted and takes some of the momentum out of the progressive wave that has swept America since Zohran Mamdani's election as mayor of New York last year.

In his victory speech, Sayed said he "took on the machine" in a "cynical, bitter and divisive" campaign where his opponent was funded by "corporations and special interests" as he paid tribute to his mentor, Bernie Sanders, the left-wing Vermont senator, whom he described as the "OG".

"What we showed is that the power of our many is greater than the power of their money," he said, echoing Jeremy Corbyn's slogan from Labour's losing 2017 election campaign.

He suggested that the Republican Party had attempted to run a racist campaign by using his full name "Abdulrahman Mohamed El-Sayed", in the same manner that President Trump referred to "Barack Hussein Obama". "If you can't say the name Abdulrahman, keep the damn name out your mouth," he said.

Students at the University of Michigan and Michigan State University supported Sayed's campaign, while moderate black voters in Detroit turned out in large numbers for Stevens, the four-term congresswoman.

The late counting in Wayne County, which covers Detroit, complicated progressives' attempt to portray the race as a thumping victory. The heart of America's automotive industry, Detroit, has a majority black population but has a significant Arab-American community concentrated in the suburb of Dearborn.

There have been tensions between the two communities during the race. One African-American voter who spoke to The Times last week said that Sayed's "culture doesn't have respect for women".

Republicans appeared delighted with Sayed's victory because it gives President Trump further ammunition to paint the Democrats as extremists before November's elections.

Reacting to the outcome yesterday, Trump called Sayed a "communist" and warned of a "rigged election" in November. "The Radical Left Socialist has a real shot, and don't discount all of those fake mail-in ballots that will 'surprisingly' show up at the last moment," he posted on Truth Social. He called Detroit "one of the most corrupt voting areas in the United States" and "strictly Third World".

Sayed, the son of an Egyptian engineer who emigrated to Detroit in the 1970s, received a medical degree from the University of Michigan before winning a Rhodes Scholarship to Oriel College Oxford, where he earned a blue captaining the lacrosse team.

He lectured in epidemiology at Columbia University in New York, before returning to Michigan and being appointed head of Detroit's public health department at the age of 30.

An Arabic speaker with a talent for producing viral social media videos, he went weightlifting with Hasan Piker, the influential pro-Palestinian podcaster, last year.

As a swing state that voted for President Trump in 2024, Michigan is more electorally significant than New York, where Mamdani's election as mayor last year set off a flurry of socialist wins.

After that victory, left-wingers affiliated with the Democratic Socialists of America (Sayed is politically aligned with the group, but not a member) chalked up primary wins in safe Democrat districts from Brooklyn to Denver that were dominated by college-educated liberals.

However, progressives are yet to prove their mettle in a swing state and a November victory for Sayed in Michigan would offer some proof that left-wingers can win over Trump voters.

For that reason, the two likeliest progressive candidates in 2028 — Ocasio-Cortez and Ro Khanna, the California congressman — both endorsed Sayed and travelled to Michigan to campaign alongside him.

A DSA candidate, Donavan McKinney, also won a House primary in Detroit on Tuesday, defeating his moderate opponent Shri Thanedar in Michigan's 13th district.

Moderates argue that Sayed's narrow victory does not mean a leftwards shift, pointing to the fact that centrist candidates are standing for the Democrats in many of the other significant midterm Senate races, including North Carolina, Ohio, Alaska, Texas and Iowa.

On the same night that Sayed won in Michigan, a primary in Missouri's first congressional district went against the party's left wing, after Cori Bush, a former Black Lives Matter activist, failed in her attempt to regain her seat from Wesley Bell, a pro-Israel moderate.

"Sayed is going to make the case that his win is the bellwether for the rest of the country," said Matt Bennett, a former Democrat staffer for Bill Clinton, who works for Third Way, a moderate think tank. "I think this is a massive overinterpretation."

Nevertheless, the fact that Stevens, who received more than $30 million from the pro-Israel lobby group Aipac and outspent Sayed nine to one, failed to defeat him suggests that any Democratic candidate arguing for a continuation of American military aid to Israel will struggle to get the party's nomination in 2028. "Aipac is only dropping money in this race because they want us to be focused on what's happening over there," Sayed told the Times before polling day.

Left-wing activists are determined to sever the Democrats' ties to Israel and an attempted terror attack on a synagogue in Detroit this year did little to affect Sayed's momentum in a state with a large Arab diaspora.

Many pollsters still believe the most important factor in November's midterms will be Trump's popularity. The president remains increasingly unpopular — hitting a second-term low of -20.6 this week, according to the Silver Bulletin average of approval ratings.

As midterm elections tend to favour the party that does not hold the White House, Democrats may still feel confident of success, even though moderates believe Sayed will be a tougher sell to swing voters in Michigan than Stevens would have been.

Michigan Senate results

Democratic primary

Abdul el-Sayed
740,950 votes **(48.5%)**

Haley Stevens
726,057 **(47.5%)**

Mallory McMorrow
61,250 **(4%)**

With 99% of votes counted — Source: Associated Press

Abdul el-Sayed is aiming to become America's first Muslim senator

'They killed my family. Revenge is our only option'

Afghans count cost as conflict with Pakistan escalates, writes **Anthony Loyd** in Mandekhail

It was after 11pm when the first Pakistani bomb hit the roof of a house where 35 men, women and children lay sleeping. It blew the building apart and all but three were wounded or killed. Among the victims was Najma, a three-year-old girl, whose arm was torn off, and Luqman, a 12-year-old boy, who was killed in his bed.

Villagers ran to the debris to pull out survivors. Then the second bomb landed. The heat of the blast set some people on fire; others were torn apart. As the cries of the wounded rose up, flames illuminated a vista of rubble and bodies.

Pakistan's "double-tap" airstrike on Mandekhail, in Afghanistan's Paktia province, killed 17 and left more than a hundred wounded. More than a month later, many remain in hospital with life-changing injuries.

Far from being an isolated incident, the attack on June 28 is part of a pattern of escalating violence between Afghanistan's Taliban government and its former ally Pakistan. In a report published last week, the United Nations assistance mission in Afghanistan said that 499 Afghan civilians had been killed and 1,216 wounded during the past nine months in fighting between the neighbouring countries. Most were killed in airstrikes.

Pakistan commonly claims that Afghan casualties are militants from the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a proscribed Pakistani Taliban organisation that often takes refuge in Afghanistan's border areas. Formed in 2007, the group is committed to overthrowing Pakistan's government, and its presence in Afghanistan is the main reason for the present conflict.

In Pakistan, dozens of soldiers were killed last month in TTP attacks and four days ago, a TTP suicide bomber killed 17 people in an attack on a police station in Swat.

Yet accounts from survivors of the June 28 airstrike on Mandekhail who spoke to The Times suggested that the TTP had no presence in the village. Instead, the strike appears to have been yet another punitive or mistaken attack on civilians who had no involvement in the conflict.

"The Pakistanis blasted my home and family, and killed my brother," said Attaullah Malyar, 16, as he stood in the wreckage of the bedroom where his younger brother Luqman was killed as he slept. "The Pakistanis are our great enemy," Attaullah added, a flash of anger in his eyes. "We can never trust them. We have no other recourse than revenge."

Mandekhail is a Pashtun village of more than a thousand people in the southeastern foothills of the Hindu Kush. Some of its elders fought against Soviet troops during the 1979-89 occupation but the area around it was largely peaceful during the US-led occupation in 2001-21, and it escaped airstrikes or bombs.

That all changed on June 28, when the village celebrated the return of one of its residents, Haji Hassan, from his pilgrimage to Mecca. In keeping with tradition, scores of locals drove out from the village to accompany him home from the haj.

In a country that has seen wedding parties and civic ceremonies bombed by the US because drones mistook them for militant assemblies, the celebration might have been enough in the eyes of Pakistani drones to target Mandekhail.

Some survivors believe the celebratory convoy was mistakenly identified as a TTP cortège. Most think they were merely a convenient target for Pakistani vengeance.

The airstrike hit a house occupied by three brothers — Bacha Khan, Bismillah Khan and Qari Abdullah — their children and families. "It wasn't a misunderstanding," said Fathullah Darwish, 28, a doctor and Bacha Khan's son, who was asleep on the ground floor with his wife and

Ancient lost statue muscles its way back into limelight
Page 29

Thousands went back but not the children
Page 30

ANTHONY LOYD FOR THE TIMES; ALAMY; AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Attaullah Malyar, 16, stands in the wreckage of the bedroom where his brother was killed in a strike on a house, top left. Below, mourners at the funeral for the victims

two infant daughters when the first bomb hit. "Nor were there any TTP in our house. The Pakistanis hit us out of convenience because they were unable to fight our government's forces."

The blast broke Darwish's leg and ribs and lacerated his arm and the tendons in his hand. His wife and daughters remain in hospital with serious injuries.

Although it sometimes imprisoned Taliban commanders or traded their whereabouts to US forces, Pakistan was the Taliban's biggest regional supporter.

However, since the Taliban's return to power five years ago, the former friends have fallen out. The Taliban reasserted their independence and rejected Pakistan's interference in their affairs. The Taliban's blossoming relationship with India further antagonised the Pakistanis. Indian and Afghan ministers have met regularly since last year, and trade between the two countries surpassed $1.5 billion in the past financial year.

The TTP proved to be the final straw in the relationship. Pakistan has long accused the Taliban of providing refuge inside Afghanistan for the TTP, from where it launches terrorist attacks on its neighbour.

Tensions increased sharply last October when Pakistan launched airstrikes on what it said were TTP targets in Afghanistan. The Taliban struck back. Over two days, dozens of fighters from both sides, including at least 23 Pakistani soldiers, were killed in clashes along the frontier.

The violence has escalated since, notably in March when 269 civilians, most of them patients, were killed in a Pakistani airstrike on a drug rehabilitation centre in Kabul. Islamabad has also forcibly returned to its neighbour more than a million Afghan refugees who had sought sanctuary in Pakistan.

The fallout from the conflict has hit Afghanistan hard. Now that its border with Pakistan is closed, and the US conflict with Iran is disrupting trade, its economy is in turmoil. More than 17 million of its 45 million people are facing acute hunger, and millions more are at risk of severe malnutrition.

"The strikes have stunted the Afghan government's effort to become a regional trade hub for central Asia," Ibraheem Bahiss, an analyst at the International Crisis Group, said. "It has reintroduced war to the country. Pakistani jets have bombed downtown Kabul and Kandahar. Psychologically, Afghans are no longer sure about the [Taliban's] staying power."

An insurgency against the Taliban in Badakhshan, a northeastern province, grew last month, pitting anti-Taliban fighters from the Afghanistan Freedom Front against government forces. Some see the hidden hand of Pakistan fomenting civil unrest to weaken the Taliban.

Yet even as violence returns to their lives, some Afghans see the depredations of war as a lesser evil beside the hardships of the peace.

Gul Afsar, 40, was one of the Mandekhail villagers who rushed to pull survivors from the rubble on June 28. He was seriously injured by the second bomb and spent 19 days in hospital before returning home. He said: "We do not want a return to war ... We want peace, but what can we do with a peace with permanent hunger?"

Debris from SpaceX rocket crashes into the moon

Jacqui Goddard Miami

A SpaceX rocket segment left over from a lunar-landing mission has crashed into the moon at 5,400mph.

The collision at 7.35am BST yesterday produced a blast roughly equivalent to 15,000 sticks of dynamite and a debris plume that scientists believed may stretch up to 62 miles high.

Imagery from Nasa and a South Korean satellite are expected over the coming days, potentially yielding a trove of valuable scientific data.

"Because the timing, location and speed of the crash are known in advance, this event is a rare opportunity to learn about impact physics, the properties of lunar soil, planetary protection and the safety of future operations on the lunar surface," said William Jo, a researcher in aerospace engineering at the University of Texas, Austin.

The impact was set to occur near the moon's Einstein Crater, which was created by a natural impact possibly billions of years ago. Its location is close to the moon's visible western limb.

More than 60 items of human-made space junk have crashed on the moon since 1959 when Luna 2, an uncrewed Soviet craft, intentionally impacted the surface. It was during the early days of the space race between the Soviet Union and the United States and aimed to demonstrate Soviet technological capability, in addition to collecting scientific data.

Between 1970 and 1972, during Nasa's Apollo lunar exploration era, the upper stages of the rockets that launched men to the moon were deliberately slammed into the surface to create moonquakes, to calibrate the seismometers that crews left there for scientific research.

The unplanned impact involved the discarded part of a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket that launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida, in January 2025, carrying Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost lunar lander.

The lander touched down on the moon in March 2025. The 13.7m (45ft) rocket stage that helped to propel it off the earth was meant to have fallen away and eventually burn up in Earth's atmosphere. For reasons unknown, it remained in space and spent the months since being dragged closer and closer to the moon.

Bill Gray of Project Pluto, a website for amateur astronomers, said: "If this object had hit the earth, as most upper stages do, it would have burnt up in the upper atmosphere on re-entering and simply added some fine dust up there. Since this object is instead hitting the moon, there will be a sudden impact, a flash of light and then some lunar rock blasted out of a crater at high speed, with no air resistance to slow it down."

The chances of people on Earth being able to see the impact flash were "slim, though not impossible", Gray said.

"If we have humans on the moon in the coming years, we might start to worry more about this sort of thing. But it won't be a problem on August 5 ... it doesn't present any danger to anyone, though it does highlight a certain carelessness about how leftover space hardware is disposed of," he added.

MARIA CHADINA/INSTAGRAM

Maria Chadina has hundreds of thousands of online followers and posts videos of herself and her soldier husband

Glamorous blogger on mission to make Putin's war trendy

For years, the face of Kremlin propaganda has been aggressive state television presenters who threaten to reduce western countries to radioactive wastelands and portray President Putin as Russia's saviour (Marc Bennetts writes).

Russians who get their information mainly from state television are the most enthusiastic supporters of the war in Ukraine, surveys by the Levada Centre, an independent pollster in Moscow, show. Yet as the war grinds on, into its fifth year, the Kremlin is eager to connect with social media users, whose views are not always in tune with the party line.

That is where Maria Chadina, an influential blogger with hundreds of thousands of online followers, comes in. A former lifestyle blogger, Chadina, 25, is married to a Russian soldier and has been accused by Novaya Gazeta Europe, an exiled opposition website, of seeking to make the Kremlin's brutal war seem "glamorous and trendy".

The website wrote: "A well-groomed young woman with flawless make-up and a velvety voice ... Chadina alternates posts about love and family life with claims that there is no political repression in Russia, that Ukraine has no state sovereignty, and that there will be no new wave of mobilisation. Her blog demonstrates how 'Z-patriotism' can be fashionable, cosmopolitan, and 'Europeanised'."

Born in 2000 — the year that Putin came to power — in Obninsk, 60 miles from Moscow, Chadina only began posting about politics and the war last year.

She has already gained almost 400,000 followers on Instagram. Although the US social media website is banned in Russia, it is accessible with VPN software.

Among her most popular posts are videos of her reuniting with her husband, Vladimir, when he is allowed home on leave. She refuses to speak to "liberal" media outlets and has said that she was proud to be called a Kremlin agent.

"I genuinely believe that the Russian people have a specific, sacred mission. Part of that mission is to fight against these monsters," she said in an interview, referring to Ukraine and its western allies. She has advised Russians not to question the Kremlin. "The leadership knows best," she added.

In May she was given an award at a ceremony in Moscow sponsored by the Kremlin-backed Institute of Internet Development for the fastest-growing political blog last year. She dedicated the award to her husband. "Victory will be ours," she said.

Chadina's rise to prominence has been helped by Base Media, a Moscow-based PR agency whose clients include other pro-Kremlin figures.

A source at Dialog, an organisation which helps the Kremlin to influence social media, told Novaya Gazeta Europe: "Her channel and videos hit the mark: a sweet, beautiful young wife of a soldier fighting in the 'special military operation', and a patriot."

Yulia Akhmedova, the journalist who compiled the website's profile of Chadina, wrote: "This is the most dangerous form of propaganda: people get so caught up in the beautiful imagery they fail to analyse what Maria is saying."

The registered owner of Base Media is the mother of Sargis Mirzakhanian, a political strategist who was accused in 2023 by the US-based Organised Crime and Corruption Reporting Project of involvement in an attempt to promote pro-Moscow views among European politicians. He did not comment on the allegations.

Among Chadina's online followers are the female relatives of soldiers, including those who have been killed in action.

Not all social media users are fans, however. "This young woman is dangerous ... with her languid delivery she instills a false sense of security in those at risk of being mobilised," a Russian social media user wrote.

Chadina said on her Telegram channel: "They are afraid of me!"

Zelensky pleads for missile defences

Ukraine

Catherine Philp Kyiv

President Zelensky pleaded with allies to send US-made Patriot interceptors after Ukraine ran out of stocks, leaving the capital defenceless against a massive ballistic attack that killed at least 17 people.

The overnight attack on Kyiv was the one of the most intense in a weeks-long campaign by Russia to exhaust Ukraine's air defences with salvos of ballistic missiles.

Ukraine was unable to shoot down any of the 28 Russian missiles fired at the capital last night after running out of interceptors for the Patriot system, the only air defence capable of shooting down high-speed ballistic missiles.

"Ballistic interceptors are what could have saved the lives of those killed today," Zelensky said in a social media post confirming the attack.

"It is very important for partners to realise that delays in their deliveries or failure to provide anti-ballistic measures lead to such terrible casualties."

Zelensky added that supplies of air defence missiles had dropped threefold this year compared with last year while Russia has stepped up its use of ballistic missiles. Global shortages of the Patriot interceptors have been exacerbated by the war in Iran which has seen the United States and Gulf allies rely on the systems to see off Iranian missiles and drones. Ukraine has received 600 Patriot missiles throughout the entire war, compared with the 800 used to repel Iranian strikes in the first few days of that conflict alone, according to American media.

On Saturday, after strikes that killed nine in Kyiv, Zelensky revealed those stocks were now exhausted. "Only one ballistic missile was intercepted simply because there are no interceptors for the Patriot systems," he wrote.

Ukraine is one of about 20 countries waiting for Patriot interceptors, which can take more than two years to manufacture and cost about $4 million per round.

At last month's Nato summit in Ankara, President Trump said that Washington would grant Ukraine a licence to produce the interceptors domestically, only to walk that promise back last week, saying: "Those people that you give that technology, they can someday turn on you."

Many European Nato member states have Patriot missiles in their arsenal which they could transfer to Ukraine with US permission. Since Trump cut aid to Ukraine, European allies have bought American hardware including Patriots before handing them to Kyiv.

But critically low stocks worldwide have left states nervous of parting with their own interceptors for fear they would not be able to replace them.

Patriot production runs at about 620 missiles a year and efforts to scale that up will take up to four years.

That has left Ukrainian civilians facing the consequences. Last week ten members of the same family were killed in a Russian strike on their village in southern Ukraine by a North Korean ballistic missile. At the Nato summit, Zelensky described Moscow's ballistic arsenal as Russia's last advantage, adding: "We are capable of doing everything else ourselves, but when it comes to air defence we need our partners' determination."

During a visit to Washington last week for the funeral of the pro-Ukrainian senator Lindsey Graham, Zelensky asked Trump to secure Elon Musk's permission for Ukraine to use his Starlink internet service inside Russia to strike its missile launchers.

While Musk has reluctantly given Ukraine permission to use the system for drone operations, he has balked at allowing its use for offensive operations deep inside Russia. Taking the fight to Russian launch sites could help get around Ukraine's dependence on Patriot supplies.

Ukraine is working on its own native anti-ballistic defence system in partnership with European governments.

The Freyja missile defence project was launched in Paris last month by ten European governments and 12 defence firms. But it is not expected to be ready for use until next year.

The overnight attack on Kyiv lasted more than two hours, striking transport and commercial premises including warehouses belonging to the Ukraine private courier service Nova Poshta.

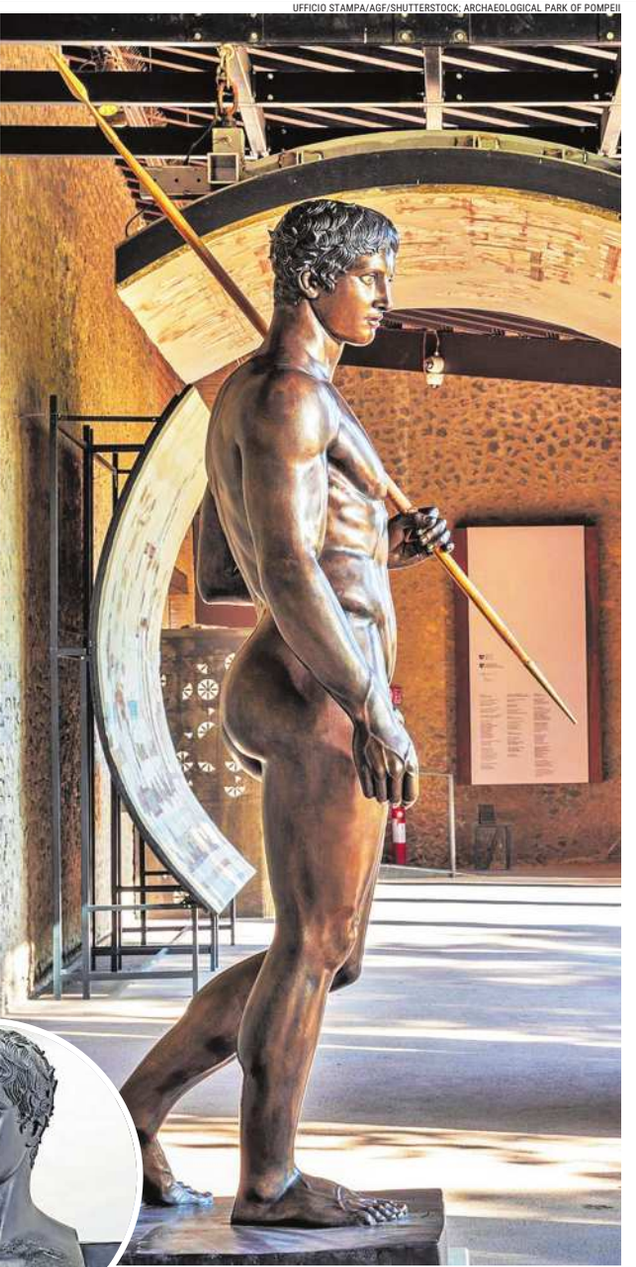
Last month, Kyiv began a drone campaign targeting the Russian e-retailer Wildberries which has supplied dual-use items including drone components to the military. After the US launched its war on Iran this year, Ukraine dispatched teams of military advisers to the Gulf to share its expertise on countering Iranian attack drones.

Zelensky said then that he expected governments to reciprocate Ukraine's assistance by sharing the more advanced missiles it was running out of.

Firefighters at the site of a Russian missile strike yesterday, a ballistic missile attack that lasted more than two hours and killed at least 17 people

The bronze reconstruction of the Canon of Polykleitos is on display at the Palestra Grande in Pompeii. The head was reproduced from a bronze bust found at a villa in Herculaneum, below

UFFICIO STAMPA/AGF/SHUTTERSTOCK; ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK OF POMPEII



Ancient lost statue muscles its way back into limelight

Italy

James Imam Milan

In the fifth century BC, a Greek sculptor created a vision of the human body so perfectly balanced that it would define the course of western sculpture for the next two millennia.

Known as the *Canon*, after the treatise in which its creator, Polykleitos, distilled the mathematical principles behind human form, the statue portrayed a muscular young man with a javelin slung over his shoulder. The statue, often referred to as *Doryphoros*, inspired countless marble copies during antiquity, helping to establish an ideal of beauty later embraced by Michelangelo and Raphael.

Yet the original masterpiece disappeared centuries ago.

Now, after more than 2,000 years, archaeologists in Pompeii believe they have come closer to recreating it. Drawing on the finest surviving Roman copies, they have produced a new bronze reconstruction they say challenges modern assumptions about how people in the ancient world understood beauty.

"Research in Pompeii is much more than excavations and telling the story of ancient life," Gabriel Zuchtriegel, director of the archaeological park in Pompeii, said. "If we want to continue studying Greek art, it could be a good idea to look at Pompeii, Herculaneum and Stabiae."

The new bronze statue displayed at the park was largely modelled on a marble copy of the *Canon* discovered at Pompeii in 1793 — the most complete version of about 50 known copies. The head was based on a bronze bust found at a villa in Herculaneum, another nearby archaeological site, chosen because it was considered an "excellent copy" in the original material.

Nineteenth-century casts of both works, produced by a Naples foundry, provided an additional reference.

Using the same technique as Polykleitos, craftsmen sculpted a full wax statue, covered it in clay and heated it in a furnace so that the wax melted away. Molten bronze was then poured into the empty mould before the shell was broken away to reveal the newly created statue.

Using polychromy, the ancient technique of decoration in many colours, the sculpture was painted in dark tones for the hair and brown pigments for the eyes, likely to reflect what would have been used on the original. The tone of the complexion recalls the faces represented in frescoes at Pompeii.

"This figure represents a young man who could have come from Greece, from Italy, from Syria or Morocco," Zuchtriegel said, noting the spread of the Roman empire. "When we're looking at white marble statues, we're losing the colours and risk losing this Mediterranean vision of beauty and harmony."

Pompeii's research also aims to solve the puzzle of the statue's identity. For more than a century, scholars have generally treated Doryphoros and Canon as two names for the same work by Polykleitos. However, Zuchtriegel argues that the ancient evidence points to two distinct statues. He notes that Pliny the Elder referred separately to the *Doryphoros*, describing it as a boy, and the *Canon*, suggesting they were different works.

Under this reinterpretation, the famous Pompeii statue and its related Roman copies — including the example in the Minneapolis Institute of Art — should be identified as the *Canon*, not the *Doryphoros*. Zuchtriegel instead proposes that the true *Doryphoros* may have been a different Polykleitan statue type, known as the *Westmacott Ephebe*, represented by about 50 Roman copies, including the best-known example in the British Museum.

Pompeii's new bronze is being displayed at the Palestra Grande, an ancient gymnasium surrounded by porticoes. Instead of the long spear traditionally associated with the *Doryphoros*, the figure carries a javelin made of wood, leather and metal, reflecting the team's conclusion about what kind of weapon *Canon* held.

"These are incredible treasures to understand the history of art in antiquity," Zuchtriegel said.

Rome's street stalls return after tat ban thrown out

James Imam

Rome's traditional souvenir vendors have scored a rare victory in their fight to return to the city's historic centre, after Italy's highest administrative court overturned efforts to remove their stalls from landmarks including the Colosseum, Piazza di Spagna and the Trevi fountain.

In 2014, the city council ordered street vendors selling maps, trinkets and religious items such as statuettes of saints to move their covered stalls away from prime locations in the Unesco-protected historic centre in an effort to curb tourist tat. About 60 vendors were required to relocate. The decision sparked protests and a prolonged court battle between the council and 115 vendors, who have operated in the Eternal City since the 19th century.

This week, the Council of State ruled that the ban was invalid because the council had failed to adequately consult the sellers. The judgment allows the vendors to return to their original pitches immediately.

Angelo Pavoncello, a spokesperson for the sellers, said: "Justice took a while, but it finally came." He added that the first stalls had already returned to the Colosseum.

Rome authorities have had greater success in tackling a growing imbalance between tourist shops and traditional businesses. In May, after a separate ruling by the Council of State, the city council extended a three-year ban on bricks-and-mortar souvenir shops and small convenience stores opening in the historic centre after their numbers rose to about 3,000. Meanwhile, about 2,000 businesses in the Italian capital close each year as Airbnb lets force up rents, according to the Confesercenti business association. The group has called for tax breaks and simpler administrative procedures.

Last month, Italy's Marche region passed a so-called "anti-kebab" law that offers financial incentives to shops selling traditional local food.

A souvenir stallholder waits for tourists outside the Colosseum

Bin collectors to the rescue after lottery winner kicks up a stink

James Imam

When a local from Italy's southern Puglia region realised they had accidentally thrown away a lottery ticket worth €1 million they were overcome with disbelief and anguish.

Now the head of a waste disposal company has led a successful operation to recover the ticket from a six-tonne mountain of rubbish, returning it to its owner in the town of Bitonto, and becoming a national hero. "It was wonderful to see the joy of those who had their hands in the rubbish finding the ticket, because it was as if they had won themselves," said Roberto Toscano, the head of the waste company.

He added: "The winner called me in tears and gave an imaginary hug to all the workers."

Italy's latest millionaire had bought the ticket at a shop and discarded it after reading that it was "non-payable".

The message is reserved for the highest winning sums, which are paid directly by the lottery rather than retailers, but the ticket holder, who remains anonymous, assumed it meant the ticket was worthless and threw it in a bin as they left the shop.

They realised their mistake when family members pointed out their numbers had been drawn. The winner rushed back to the shop, but by then the rubbish had already been collected.

Toscano was alerted to the problem on Sunday morning. "My first reaction was disbelief, followed by scepticism that it would be possible to find that piece of paper," he said.

The manager ordered his staff to begin a search. "We are a publicly controlled company," he said. "That sense of responsibility had to be honoured."

Luckily, the waste had not yet been taken to landfill. Staff identified the waste compactor likely to contain the ticket and placed it under "our strictly personal custody", Toscano said. The search was carried out on Tuesday morning, slowly moving the vehicle forwards so rubbish spread out lengthways rather than piling up.

Those involved wore overalls without pockets and worked with a camera recording. The cost of the operation will be covered by the winner, with expenses expected to run into several tens of thousands of euros.

To celebrate the discovery, the team went for a coffee and Toscano bought his first ever lottery ticket. "You won't believe it, but we won €50, which I left to the workers," he said.

CARLOS ALVAREZ/GETTY IMAGES

Dinner date **Princess Leonor, Queen Sofía and Infanta Sofía hosted more than 600 guests from politics, business, culture, sport and charities at Marivent Palace, Palma**

Thousands went back but not the children

Spain is facing a care crisis as minors wait in squalid conditions, **David Sharrock** writes in Ceuta

On the beaches of Ceuta the children remain, as flotsam and jetsam left behind by the massive tide of migrants that overwhelmed the tiny Spanish territory last week.

Nearly 70,000 of the estimated 72,000 people who illegally crossed into Ceuta have already returned to Morocco, either voluntarily or under emergency measures agreed between Madrid and Rabat.

But more than 1,100 unaccompanied Moroccan minors remain stranded, overwhelming migrant centres designed for only a tenth of that number. What started as a border security crisis has become a child protection emergency.

Rayan, 15, leans against his mother on a strip of pavement a few hundred metres from the Moroccan border, his forearm wrapped in a stained bandage. Jagged rocks cut him as his family scrambled around the breakwater during the crossing.

"We have received nothing since we got here," says Samira, Rayan's mother. "No food. No help." She says a Moroccan policeman urged families towards the frontier.

"He told us to hurry. He said the only way we'd come back to Morocco was if we were dead."

Of hundreds of children in the city, most without their parents, some have been laying low in its Muslim cemetery. Others drift between the empty warehouses of the Tarajal industrial estate, sleeping among rubble, mattresses and rubbish outside an improvised reception centre.

While Spanish soldiers and Civil Guard officers have steadily cleared the city of adults through returns to Morocco, the children's fate is one of institutional procedure.

Unlike adults, they cannot legally be expelled without individual assessments to establish their identity, trace relatives and determine whether returning them would be in their best interests — a process that can take months.

Spain's interior minister, Fernando Grande-Marlaska, insisted this week that "in Spain, the fundamental rights of children and adults are respected. That is beyond discussion." Walking through Ceuta, however, those assurances are tested. Fadal, a young Moroccan in Ceuta carrying two mobile phones, he said, so children could call their families, pointed to teenage girls too ill to move and said others had disappeared into poor neighbourhoods where residents fear they had been sexually exploited.

A minor is escorted by Spanish troops in Ceuta, while others are forced to shower down on the beach

Kenza, 15, parts her dark hair to reveal a wound healing on her scalp, which she says was caused by a stone thrown shortly after she arrived. She says she reached hospital bleeding but was never treated. Near by, 12-year-old Rida limps through Tarajal on a heavily bandaged knee after, he says, surviving for days on almost no food before being attacked while queueing for a meal.

Among the crowds of mostly young men last week there were cheers and shouts of "viva España," as they crossed the border. But 75 people died in just a few hours while trying to make the trip, one of the deadliest migration episodes on the European Union's external frontier.

A warehouse bearing a sign saying New Hope has become a shelter, a spillover for the main migrant reception facility. Sports halls and municipal buildings have also been pressed into service. Hundreds more children are sleeping outside, many convinced by rumours circulating on social media that reaching Ceuta would guarantee passage to mainland Spain.

The rumours had been fuelled by a law introduced last year requiring unaccompanied minors to be transferred from overwhelmed frontier regions within 15 days once they have been formally registered. Many of the children now sleeping rough are not yet even recorded by the system. For them, the legal clock has not started.

That has left Juan Jesús Vivas, Ceuta's veteran conservative Popular Party (PP) president, pleading for help. "This is an absolutely unsustainable situation," he said, adding that there was "a high risk for order and public security" in the city with a regular population of 84,000. "We are crying out for help."

In response, Madrid has approved €25 million in emergency funding and wants the children redistributed across Spain.

But as well as raising alarm bells across the EU, the crisis has also become a battleground in Spanish politics. The opposition Popular Party finds itself divided. While its administration in Ceuta is demanding solidarity, the PP runs several regional governments only with the help of the populist right-wing Vox party, and these have resisted the idea that they should accept young migrants.

Miguel Tellado, the PP's secretary-general, said the Socialist government's priority should be ensuring that migrants "leave by the same route through which they entered".

But a day later, senior PP official Alma Ezcurra softened the position, saying the party would "always comply with the law," while insisting every apparent minor must first be properly identified. Vox has been more categorical. It says "not one euro" of public money should be spent caring for the migrant children.

Resistance has also come from Junts, the Catalan separatist party whose votes are crucial to the minority government of the prime minister Pedro Sánchez. Míriam Nogueras, a spokeswoman, said Catalonia should be excluded from any redistribution because it already receives a disproportionate share of migrant children. Carlos Cuerpo, the Socialist deputy prime minister, insisted on television that parties and regional governments "must comply with the law".

Taiwan limits internet in test for Chinese attack

Taiwan The country's defence forces have started their biggest military exercise of the year, as President Trump weighs up a big arms package to the island in defiance of demands from Beijing. The Han Kuang, or "Glory to the Han", exercise this year focuses not only on defence against a physical attack from the Chinese mainland but also on countering Beijing's "grey zone" blockade and cyberwarfare tactics. Unusually, the exercise includes a partial shutdown of Taiwan's internet. It also features the latest Abrams tanks delivered by the United States as part of their unofficial alliance.

Drone carrying explosives found near airport runway

Germany A counterterrorism investigation has been opened after an explosive-laden drone was found near a runway at Leipzig airport overnight, which prompted the closure of parts of one of Europe's biggest cargo hubs. Flights were suspended and aircraft were diverted after airport staff found the drone in a restricted cargo area. During the disruption, a diverted DHL cargo plane hit an unknown object mid-air in an incident investigators are also examining. The authorities said there had been no danger to passengers or staff and most operations resumed by yesterday morning.

White House helipad gets Trump seal of disapproval

United States President Trump has ordered a revamp of work on the helipad he is having built at the White House after he was reported to have grown frustrated at its alignment with the sloping South Lawn. Contractors have uprooted a 100ft granite presidential seal on the helipad as they race to meet Trump's deadline of next month's state visit by President Xi. Trump has called for the helipad to be level with the horizon, The Washington Post reported. Sikorsky Aircraft, the Lockheed Martin subsidiary that makes Marine One helicopters, has said it will pay the construction bill of at least $5 million.

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Business

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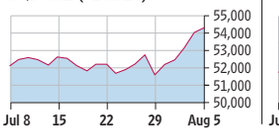

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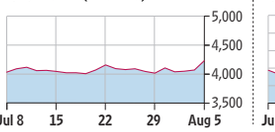

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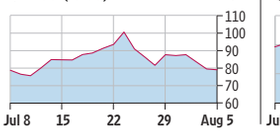

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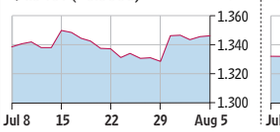

£/€
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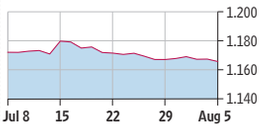

Hassabis steps down as DeepMind boss as Google shakes up AI

Chris Dorrell

Sir Demis Hassabis has stepped down as chief executive of Google DeepMind as part of a major shake-up of Alphabet's artificial intelligence division.

Hassabis, who founded the company in 2010 and sold it to Google for £400 million in 2014, will become chairman of Google DeepMind and chief scientist at Alphabet, the owner of Google. Koray Kavukcuoglu, who had previously been DeepMind's chief technology officer, will become the division's chief executive.

Hassabis, who will remain in the UK, said: "I've decided that now is the right time for me to hand over my day-to-day operational responsibilities at Google DeepMind so I have the time and space to focus on the big picture, and to help influence what is to come to the best of my ability.

"As a business we are in an incredibly strong position. We are the only company that has the full stack and we're world-class at every layer, from infrastructure to cloud to frontier models to AI-first applications," he added.

Hassabis was born in London and is one of the most influential AI researchers in the world. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2024 for his work on AlphaFold, the AI program capable of predicting the shape of proteins. He will remain chief executive of Isomorphic Labs, an AI-powered drug discovery company backed by Alphabet.

Alphabet also confirmed that Jeff Dean, the company's chief scientist, will leave, alongside several Google AI colleagues, to start their own company, Discovery Loop. Dean had been at the company for almost 27 years.

Discovery Loop will be a public benefit corporation focused on automating machine learning and engineering to accelerate scientific discoveries. Google confirmed that it will invest in the company.

Shares in Alphabet closed down $15.22, or 4.1 per cent, at $360.13 in New York. The news follows a number of high-profile departures from Alphabet's AI division as it attempts to keep up with OpenAI and Anthropic.

In the past few months, Noam Shazeer and John Jumper, two of the company's leading researchers, have left the company, joining OpenAI and Anthropic, respectively. Researchers at the company have reportedly been frustrated with the 2023 consolidation of the more scientifically minded DeepMind with Google Brain.

Bank taxes 'jeopardise investment'

Citigroup boss warns 'money votes with its feet'

Graham Ruddick Deputy Business Editor

Dame Jane Fraser, the chief executive of Citigroup, has said she is "worried" about bank taxes in the UK.

In comments made on a visit to London, Fraser warned that the UK tax rate on banks is higher than in New York, Dublin, Frankfurt and Paris, which could jeopardise investment. "Money votes with its feet," she said.

Fraser, 59, is Scottish — and as the boss of Citi, the third-largest US bank, she is the most powerful woman on Wall Street.

Fraser also said that the perception of the UK in America was that it is a "bit diminished from what it used to be", but that there is a "desire and want for the UK to succeed".

She added: "This is an important country — huge talent, great infrastructure, a strong history of capabilities and reliability. I think the intent from most of the business community vis-à-vis the UK is that we want the UK to succeed.

"We want to see some of the things that have held the country back getting taken down by the government and the country fulfilling its potential. That is the overwhelming sentiment from the business community."

Citi employs 14,000 people in the UK and is opening new offices at Canary Wharf. Fraser took over as Citi boss in March 2021; since then shares in the bank have almost doubled.

Fraser's comments about bank taxes follow a similar warning from Jamie Dimon, the boss of JP Morgan.

Asked if she was concerned about a new bank tax in the UK under Andy Burnham's government, Fraser said: "Where I get concerned is London is such an important centre, a financial centre around the world. The world needs London to work well and to continue to prosper and innovate.

"There aren't great alternatives. We need stronger alternatives to New York because you need the diversification. But money votes with its feet."

Fraser said the tax rate for banks was already about 48 per cent in London compared to New York at 27 per cent and Dublin at around 28 to 29 per cent.

"It makes it a tougher decision," Fraser added. "It's already one of the most expensive centres in the world. Your clients have a lot of choices where things get booked. We have to make choices to where things get booked. If the taxes go up even higher, then that makes it an easier decision not to book it in London."

Fraser said alternative places for Citi to invest included France, Germany, Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan.

She added: "The UK is important. It's got talent, it's got infrastructure, it's got pretty sensible regulatory capabilities and the like. But that difference — and I hate to be Scottish about it — it gets overcome pretty quickly. I am quite worried about it.

"I'm not sitting there going: 'OK, this is a catastrophe.' But we care about the UK. This is a very important centre for Citi. I don't want to see London diminished."

My advice for the new PM, pages 32-33

ALAMY

Not all plain sailing Moana underperformed but Toy Story 5 and theme park attendance helped Disney's revenues Page 37

Glencore digs into listing in Sydney

Emma Powell

One of the world's largest mining companies is set to launch a secondary listing in Sydney, raising fresh questions over London's status as the home for global resources companies.

The move by Glencore, which is one of the London market's largest listed companies, comes after the group faced pressure to move its primary listing to boost its valuation.

The £64.6 billion group said that the secondary listing would "strengthen our profile in one of our most important operating jurisdictions, broaden our shareholder base, improve trading liquidity and enhance corporate financial flexibility".

Australia is home to "one of the world's largest and fastest-growing pools of long-term investment capital" and offered "access to a highly sophisticated investor base with deep expertise in the global resources sector", Gary Nagle, Glencore's chief executive, said.

Glencore has previously faced pressure from Tribeca Investment Partners, an Australian hedge fund, to move from London to boost its valuation.

Ben Cleary, a portfolio manager at Tribeca Global Natural Resources, said that the London stock market "is a joke exchange for mining companies, low liquidity and low multiples, and the [secondary listing] may well be the opening gambit to a primary listing".

He added: "Glencore would be the sixth-largest company on the exchange on our numbers, which makes it larger than ANZ Bank, so will be very relevant for local investors."

The group is targeting admission to the Australian Stock Exchange in October. It mines commodities including energy coal and steelmaking coal, copper and cobalt, and it has one of the world's biggest commodities trading businesses.

The plans for an Australian secondary listing came alongside half-year results that revealed an 86 per cent rise in adjusted earnings to $10.1 billion, the second-highest level ever. The performance was boosted by its marketing division, which has cashed in on the volatility in energy markets since the outbreak of the war in the Middle East.

Earnings for the trading arm more than doubled to $3.3 billion, which put the business on track to "comfortably exceed" the upper end of its long-term annual profit guidance range of $2.3 billion to $3.5 billion.

Shares in Glencore rose 22¾p, or 4.1 per cent, to close yesterday at 573¼p.

Need to know

1 Dame Jane Fraser, the chief executive of Citigroup, said she is "worried" about bank taxes in the UK. Fraser warned the UK tax rate on banks is higher than in New York, Dublin, Frankfurt and Paris, which could jeopardise investment. "Money votes with its feet," she said. Page 31

2 One of the UK's largest mining firms is set to launch a secondary listing in Sydney. The move by Glencore comes after the group faced pressure to move its primary listing to boost its valuation. Page 31

3 Sir Demis Hassabis has stepped down as chief executive of Google DeepMind — part of a major shake-up of Alphabet's artificial intelligence division. Page 31

4 Reports of merger talks between AstraZeneca and US rival Bristol Myers Squibb that wiped close to £18 billion off the FTSE 100 group's market value have been called into doubt, amid claims there was "never a deal to be done".

5 A jump in electric vehicle sales driven by high petrol prices, discounts and incentives resulted in the strongest UK new car market in seven years in July. Battery electric vehicle sales rose 44.5 per cent year-on-year to a record 43,106. Page 34

6 Strong sales of Spanish lager Cruzcampo have helped Heineken deliver better-than-expected profits in the first half of the year. UK volumes of Cruzcampo jumped by more than 30 per cent, helped by the launch of Sevilla Orange flavour. Page 36

7 Sunny British weather and increased marketing efforts helped Next to deliver better than expected sales in the latest quarter and to boost its full-year profit forecast again. Page 37

8 Sir Martin Sorrell's advertising company has narrowed losses and slowed a decline in revenue. S4 Capital reported a 4.7 per cent fall in net revenue on a like-for-like basis during the first six months of the year, half the 10 per cent drop in the same period last year. Page 41

"It is reassuring a leading figure in the artificial intelligence buildout is studying history

Louisa Clarence-Smith, page 35

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What I'd tell the PM? Have big ears and a thick skin

Citigroup's Jane Fraser tells **Graham Ruddick** her thinking on Burnham, Trump — and her reputation

As the boss of Citigroup, Dame Jane Fraser is one of the most powerful figures on Wall Street and one of the most influential Brits in the business world. During a visit to London yesterday, Fraser spoke to reporters about issues ranging from bank taxes to Andy Burnham, but also the financial markets, President Trump and her journey to the top of banking from Scotland. This is what she said.

ON ANDY BURNHAM

The Citi boss has yet to meet the new prime minister but hopes to in the autumn. "I'm glad to say they're actually focused on what they need to be doing, which is how they're going to be running the country," Fraser said of the government. "If they were making time to see me, I'd be a little worried."

Fraser shared some advice for the new prime minister that she was given when she became Citi boss in 2021: "Have big ears and thick skin."

She added: "That thick skin is a resiliency — stick with the plan and focus on the long run. But the big ears is just listen.

"Don't let it get in the way of being decisive, so you get confused by all the different views — but listen and then work out what is in the UK's best interest.

"We need growth and we need competitiveness. Our strongest competitive capability here is our capital market. Don't undermine it."

Fraser said the UK "can't afford everything" and has to make difficult decisions.

"I grew up when the Labour Party had a 105 per cent tax rate in the late 70s. It was a disaster for the country. You don't grow and you don't build businesses. So I think there's a balance. But there's also some tough choices [to be made]. We cannot afford everything here that we would like to pay for. Being realistic about that and having a sensible fiscal policy that the market finds palatable is going to be very important."

ON MARKETS

With sharp movements in the price of oil and technology-related share prices, it is "quite a precarious time" in financial markets, Fraser said.

There is huge capital expenditure, she explained, and some of this is from companies that do not have the cash-flow Google, Microsoft or Apple has.

"Naturally, I think that makes people nervous as time goes by. It's a lot of money," the Citi boss said.

ON PRESIDENT TRUMP

The US president has praised Fraser and Citi on social media. In June he wrote on Trump Social: "Congratulations to Jane F and ALL of her great people. They've worked really hard! BIG comeback for CITI!!!"

That post raised questions about why President Trump was singling out Citi for praise. "I don't know," said Fraser when asked.

"We both have a Scottish mother. I think that helps," she quipped. "I think I've only met him a few times. Not that many. I wouldn't say I have a personal relationship with him." The 59-year-old refused to be drawn on her view of Trump's politics, such as his crackdown on diversity targets.

"I do my job. I keep my personal opinion to myself on all different matters. When you have these roles, you do your job. Whether I agree, disagree, or whatever is utterly irrelevant. I need to follow the laws, rules and regulations in the countries I'm in and I follow my clients' interests. My job is not to comment on politics."

ON HER RISE IN THE US

"I never imagined that," Fraser said on whether she had always aimed for the top of the banking world. "I mean, I grew up in Monifieth [a town in Scotland] and no, I never imagined that until a few years before it came about."

Fraser studied economics at Cambridge University and did an MBA at Harvard. She spent ten years at McKinsey, the consultancy firm, and joined Citi in 2004. She spent 17 years climbing the ranks of the US bank before becoming chief executive in 2021.

"Home is America, but I definitely have a Scottish identity," Fraser explained. "I get very upset because my sons identify as English because they grew up in London. The boys all wear kilts to weddings in the US. Women love them, you know. They're not stupid. They get a lot more attention than

Source denies Astra in merger talks

James Hurley Assistant Business Editor

Reports of merger talks between AstraZeneca and a US rival that wiped close to £18 billion off the FTSE 100 group's market value have been called into doubt, amid claims there was "never a deal to be done".

Purported discussions with Bristol Myers Squibb to create one of the world's biggest pharmaceutical groups resulted in the British giant losing 9 per cent of its value on Monday.

But Reuters reported that there are "no discussions" about a potential merger between the two companies.

It quoted a senior source who said: "There is no deal between AstraZeneca and BMS. There never was a deal to be done, and there are no discussions between the companies."

Both AstraZeneca and Bristol Myers Squibb declined to comment.

Shares in AstraZeneca rose 3 per cent following the Reuters report but were still down 5 per cent from where they were before the original report.

The Financial Times first reported news of the talks, which would have created a pharmaceutical group with a combined value of nearly $400 billion.

AstraZeneca, the London market's second-largest company, was said to have held discussions with its New Jersey-based rival in recent months.

The suggestion confused analysts, with John Murphy, a senior pharma analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence, saying it made "limited strategic sense", while Jefferies said it was "perplexed".

Objections included the overlap between the groups' drug portfolios, particularly in cancer treatments, competition hurdles, and the potential impact on research and development.

Analysts at Bank of America had warned that few giant pharma-mergers "have been perceived as successful given the frequently cited disruption to research and development".

The Financial Times report claimed talks "could yield a deal in the near future but may be delayed or fall apart".

There had been speculation that a merger would be a sign that the British drugmaker was tilting further towards the US market, after it upgraded its New York listing earlier this year.

The company has invested tens of billions of dollars in US manufacturing since President Trump started his second term. It aims to generate half of its targeted $80 billion in annual revenue by 2030 from the US market.

Cancer treatments accounted for about $25 billion of AstraZeneca's 2025 sales, nearly half of the total, followed by cardiovascular, renal and metabolism treatments worth about $12 billion.

It is facing the loss of exclusivity on cancer drugs Tagrisso, Calquence and Imfinzi in the early 2030s. Bristol Myers Squibb is also heading into its own patent cliff, for the blood thinner Eliquis and cancer drug Opdivo. The two companies' cancer immunotherapies are in direct competition.

The Financial Conduct Authority declined to comment on whether it was looking into trading patterns following the reports for signs of market abuse.

Pension deals drive growth at L&G

Helen Cahill

Britain's leading life insurer has exceeded City forecasts for its half-year results as it seeks to deliver growth after a two-year reorganisation under its chief executive, António Simões.

Legal & General reported that core operating profit rose by 7 per cent to £918 million for the half year, beating analysts' expectations.

L&G said its institutional retirement division had written or secured pension risk transfer deals worth £5.7 billion by the end of July. L&G has become a dominant player in pension risk transfers, buying up defined benefit pension schemes from corporate sponsors.

Core operating profit in the institutional division, its largest unit, was up 5 per cent to £646 million, and rose by 10 per cent to £222 million at the asset-

JOHN LAMPARSKI/GETTY IMAGES

"I'm not ruthless," says Dame Jane Fraser, "but I am damn tough"

Americans do, so you play to your competitive advantages."

Shares in Citi have nearly doubled since Fraser took charge in March 2021. She has been credited with revitalising the bank, although at times her approach has been described as uncompromising as jobs have been cut and assets have been sold. "I'm not ruthless, but I am damn tough," Fraser said.

"Ruthless sounds like I'm being a real jerk and I think it's stupid to be a jerk. You can be tough, it doesn't mean that you can't do that in a way that helps someone.

"You have to tell people straight what's going on because they usually know anyway. So speak straight, tell people straight and then tell them how you're going to help them from there.

"There's a big difference between ruthlessness and being tough."

ON DEALING WITH SEXISM

"With a sense of humour," Fraser said. "There's no point taking offence at things like that. I mean, I've been lucky. I've worked with some great companies. Usually within the companies, there's good policies. It's not been an issue and I've probably been lucky.

"You see it a bit more in some areas. But if someone's being sexist then I find treating it with a smile and polite amusement is a far more effective tool than taking offence."

Chinese tax crackdown batters banks

Helen Cahill Financial Correspondent

The shares of British banking and financial services companies with exposure to China fell sharply yesterday after Beijing launched a global search for billions of pounds of unpaid taxes dating back decades.

Shares in UK bank HSBC, which does much of its business in Hong Kong and has extensive operations in mainland China, fell more than 5 per cent. Standard Chartered, another leading British bank that conducts a considerable amount of business in China, was down more than 2 per cent. Prudential, the insurance group that in recent years has shifted its operations to the Far East, at one stage retreated 8 per cent.

The Chinese have increased scrutiny of overseas capital gains and investments, in some cases going back as far as 2000, according to the Financial Times. Chinese banks have been told to review overseas investments by wealthy nationals to see if income was declared to the country's tax authorities. The measures appear to be aimed at filling Beijing's deepening fiscal hole.

The operations are part of a series of tax reforms focusing on gains made from buying real estate, equities, cryptocurrencies and other assets.

Meanwhile, Caixin, a publisher based in Beijing, reported that some tax bureaus had levied 20 per cent personal income tax on the returns of offshore insurance policies. It said the authorities were targeting dividend payouts and interest earned on premiums. Analysts at Citigroup said offshore vehicles were more concentrated among ultra-high net worth individuals, and any impact on earnings for finance providers was "therefore likely to be limited".

The moves follow reports in June that lenders had stopped opening Hong Kong bank accounts for clients based in China as authorities sought to limit capital flight. This year, Chinese authorities tightened requirements on investment accounts for individuals to prevent "illegal cross-border securities, futures and fund management activities". The aim was apparently to close a loophole long used by the wealthy to send assets overseas.

Bank accounts deemed suspicious by the authorities are often frozen until all relevant taxes have been paid in full.

Flutter's bet on US yet to pay out

BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Alistair Osborne*

Proof that even bookies don't price up every outcome. How could Peter Jackson have predicted this? That shifting Flutter Entertainment's primary listing to New York would have had such a spectacular impact — on both the company and him (report, page 39).

He took the plunge into America's "deeper capital markets" in May 2024 in a quest to get the group re-rated. And, in some respects, he's succeeded big time: the outfit behind the Paddy Power, Betfair and FanDuel brands has had such a thorough re-rating that the shares are now down 70 per cent in a year.

Not only that: Jackson's personal journey stateside has also now been brought to an abrupt end, not entirely of his own volition. After the fourth quarterly profits warning on the trot he's off after almost nine years in charge, handing over to Dan Taylor, the head of Flutter's (non-US) international wing.

It's been a brutal reversal for a man who, for years, barely put a foot wrong. In 2018, Jackson climbed into the saddle of Paddy Power Betfair, the business starring the Irish bookie famous for its nice irreverent ads. One of them? Two old ladies crossing a busy road, with odds and the caption: "Let's make things more interesting."

Jackson took charge of a group then valued at £7.2 billion and transformed it with what long looked one of the best win-doubles in UK M&A history. For a total $4.35 billion, he pulled off a two-part takeover of FanDuel: a soft-gambling enterprise with customers playing for prizes in fantasy sports leagues that Jackson presciently spotted was the ideal vehicle for harder gambling once US market deregulation kicked in.

The result? FanDuel is today the US No 1 for both sports and online casino bets. And roll back a year and Jackson was presiding over a US-listed business with a share price of $307 and a market cap of $54 billion. Not any more. After the latest profits alert, sending the shares down 13 per cent to $92, its market value is down to $16 billion.

What's gone wrong? Well, Jackson would admit that "our execution last year wasn't good enough": hence May's sudden exit of FanDuel boss Amy Howe. But the biggest downer? Competition from prediction markets such as Polymarket and Kalshi offering binary yes/no bets on just about everything: the date for the Strait of Hormuz reopening, the next Fed decision, the guest list for Cristiano Ronaldo's wedding.

Cleverly, they've convinced US regulators that they are financial trading products, despite taking heaps of sports bets. The upshot? They've got round the rules in some states that still outlaw sports wagers, giving them a free run at the likes of California and Texas. Worse, despite legal challenges, you wouldn't bank on any law change soon: Donald Trump Jr is an adviser to Kalshi and Polymarket, with stakes in both.

True, Flutter now has its own prediction market business. And Jackson says this is "not cannibalising" its sportsbook, with average US monthly players up 8 per cent last quarter, despite the group losing $296 million. But Flutter is still having to invest more to maintain its market leadership — a reason for the latest $210 million cut to full-year ebitda guidance — and the market's taking no chances.

Jackson insists "I still believe that the decision to move the listing to the US is the right thing for the business", given it's the world's biggest market. And who knows if the shares, which no longer trade in the UK, would have fared any better over here. Even so, Flutter still makes a cautionary tale: the American dream is no sure-fire bet.

Deal or no deal

Has someone made a packet out of fantasy M&A? It's hard to tell just yet. But that blockbuster "$400 billion tie-up" between AstraZeneca and America's Bristol Myers Squibb is a right curio. After the Financial Times came up with the story on Sunday night, complete with the caveat that any deal "may be delayed or fall apart", the market reaction on Monday was to take 9 per cent, or £18 billion, off Astra's share price — despite neither company commenting. There was also a flurry of analyst notes, largely questioning the logic of any deal.

And now? Up has popped Reuters, quoting a senior source saying: "There is no deal between AstraZeneca and BMS. There never was a deal to be done, and there are no discussions between the companies." Note: that doesn't mean there weren't ever any discussions, just that none are live. That tale got the same "no comment" from both, but Astra shares rose 2.5 per cent to £120.36, even if they're still down 5 per cent on the week.

Sure, companies don't want to comment on market rumours, as they fear setting a precedent where they'd be forced into updates on every bit of speculation. Yet, there are rules. The UK Takeover Panel could have forced a statement if the FT story was a) true; b) about talks still going on; or c) related to a bid for a UK-listed company. There's been no statement. US regulators have less strict rules but can halt trading on unusual price spikes.

And, so far, there's been nothing. Still, in the UK there are also the Financial Conduct Authority's market abuse rules. Given the value of Astra stock bought and sold, the regulator needs to check no trades were as curious as this (non) story.

Credit for banker

A banker calling for lower taxes on banks. Fancy that. Yet, Andy Burnham should not ignore the warning from the Citigroup boss Dame Jane Fraser that the UK's 48 per cent tax rate on banks is already too high versus Dublin, Frankfurt and Paris, not to mention New York's 27 per cent.

Britain has already seen how an idiotic 78 per cent rate has deterred North Sea investment. It can't afford a re-run with our biggest industry.

alistair.osborne@thetimes.co.uk

management division. Core operating profit at L&G's retail business, which sells annuities, rose 5 per cent to £248 million. Overall, profit before tax increased to £699 million, up 47 per cent from £476 million.

The FTSE 100 company raised its interim dividend by 2 per cent to 6.24p per share and said it had bought back shares worth £450 million by the end of July, having announced a £1.2 billion buyback earlier this year.

Simões said the group would exceed its strategic targets as it was "making good progress in becoming a simpler, more focused L&G".

Analysts at Peel Hunt said the group's asset management business had "improved significantly", but that pressure on margins continued to impact the retirement division.

● Britain's largest mutual life and pensions provider has seen the value of its assets under management reach a record high as it benefited from "positive market movements" over the first six months of 2026. Royal London reported that assets under management rose by 6.7 per cent to £212.5 billion despite the "increased volatility" arising from the war in the Middle East.

Barclays taken to court over frozen MFS funds

James Hurley

The administrators of a collapsed mortgage lender at the centre of an alleged £1.3 billion fraud are suing Barclays in an attempt to get the bank to release funds needed to run the insolvency.

The insolvency practitioners in control of Market Financial Solutions Limited are pursuing the bank to provide access to the accounts of the entity that sat at the centre of the group.

Administrators from AlixPartners filed the case on July 31, court records show. Barclays is among several City and Wall Street institutions exposed to MFS, which collapsed in February.

The funds were frozen the lender ahead of MFS's failure, but administrators believe they should be distributed to help fund administration work as they pursue repayments for creditors. It is not yet clear how much is being pursued — but it is understood that more than £150 million was in the accounts in question when MFS collapsed.

Barclays said it would defend the claim but declined to comment. The Financial Times reported that the bank has communicated that it has the right to use the funds to offset other losses linked to the collapse. The administrators believe the funds should be available for the benefit of all creditors.

The bank precipitated MFS's failure when it froze its accounts in November.

Insolvency practitioners have alleged in separate court filings that the bank's actions suggested it had "concerns, or strong suspicions, that these accounts were tainted by money-laundering or other criminal activities".

Several different insolvency firms are engaged on MFS work and there are more than 200 companies in the group. Barclays released up to £21 million to Grant Thornton after a similar claim in April related to a silo of the group.

Business

Record electric vehicle sales drive the market to a seven-year high

Martin Strydom, Charlotte Bend

A jump in electric vehicle sales driven by high petrol prices, manufacturer discounts and government incentives resulted in the strongest UK new car market in seven years in July.

Battery electric vehicle sales rose 44.5 per cent year-on-year to a record 43,106 to capture a 27.5 per cent share of the market, up from 21.3 per cent a year ago, Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) data showed.

Demand was spread across private buyers, business fleets and commercial operators, helping overall new car registrations increase 11.7 per cent to 156,571. It was the eighth consecutive month of market growth and the best July total since 2019 as the market continues its recovery from the pandemic.

Plug-in hybrids rose 33.6 per cent to take a 14.9 per cent market share over the month. Sales of hybrid electric vehicles — self-charging cars that combine a fuel engine with an electric motor and a battery — rose 11.6 per cent to 20,711, a 13.2 per cent share of the market.

By contrast, petrol and diesel registrations fell by 5.2 per cent and 17.7 per cent to 62,799 and 6,596, respectively.

Demand has also been boosted by the entrance of Chinese carmakers, which are starting to eat into the market share of older manufacturers. Among the best-selling models this month were the Jaecoo 7 and the MG HS, in fourth and fifth place. The top three sellers were the Ford Puma, the Nissan Qashqai and the Kia Sportage.

Despite the rise in sales, industry leaders warned that natural consumer demand continues to lag behind strict government targets.

Battery electric cars (BEVs) were up 44.5 per cent, compared with a sub-par July 2025 when some buyers delayed switching until confirmation of full model eligibility for the electric car grant, to claim a 27.5 per cent share.

The SMMT upgraded its full-year outlook, predicting that zero-emission vans will outpace the wider market and BEVs will account for 27.4 per cent of an expected 2.18 million new car market in 2026. However, that remains well short of the government's 33 per cent zero-emission vehicle mandate target.

The BEV share of the market is expected to rise as high as 32.1 per cent in 2027 against the zero-emission mandate target of 38 per cent for that year.

The shortfall is currently being bridged by aggressive price cuts, subsidised financing and fiscal support from carmakers seeking to avoid costly regulatory fines. Under the mandate, carmakers face a financial penalty of £15,000 for every car and £9,000 for every van sold short of the target.

The SMMT warned that urgent reform of the mandate was necessary due to the barriers that remain to the transition to electric cars. These include higher upfront purchase costs, insufficient charging infrastructure and mounting pressure faced by fleet operators and commercial transport firms as they attempt to run their businesses while upgrading to electric vehicles.

Mike Hawes, the SMMT's chief executive, warned that such market distortion threatens the long-term viability of the sector: "July's record EV performance is a great achievement, but cannot be sustained if manufacturers continue haemorrhaging billions in discounts.

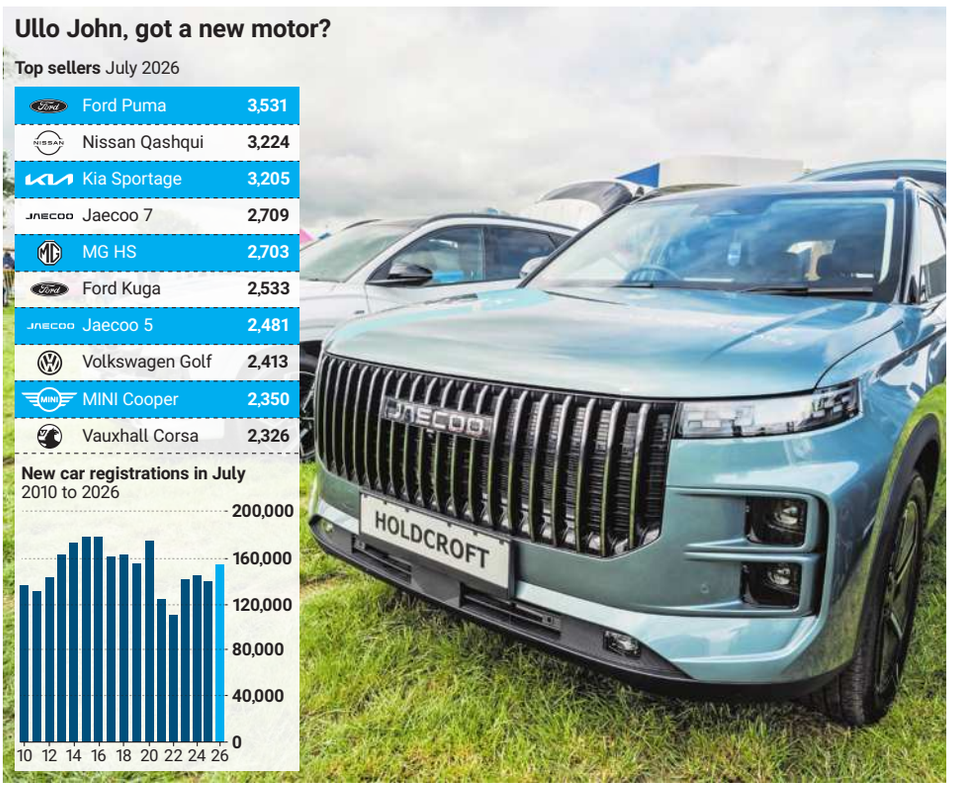
"A sustainable transition will not happen merely by compelling supply when underlying demand is not keeping pace. We need reform of the regulation — or Britain risks undermining its competitiveness and the jobs and livelihoods that depend on the industry."

Hawes also noted that while record battery electric van uptake was "encouraging", businesses will only switch if conditions are right.

Andy Burnham's government is considering whether or not to follow through on Sir Keir Starmer's plans to water down electric car sales targets.

Analysis from HSBC showed the average UK discount on EVs fell to a near 15-month low of 11 per cent in July, the lowest since April last year. The reduction in discounts could be seized upon by those urging Burnham not to follow through on Starmer's plans.

JOE MORRIS/GETTY IMAGES



Uber to invest more than $10 billion in self-driving cars

Uber Technologies forecast current-quarter adjusted earnings below Wall Street estimates, warning that foreign exchange would trim bookings growth and reaffirming plans to invest heavily in robotaxis and acquisitions.

The global ride-hailing and delivery business's capital allocation has become a key investor focus after it announced a $14.8 billion deal for Delivery Hero last month, which it plans to fund with existing liquidity and debt.

The company yesterday outlined plans to spend more than $10 billion on autonomous vehicles over the coming years, but did not provide a specific timeline.

Uber forecast third-quarter gross bookings of $58.25 billion to $60.25 billion, broadly in line with expectations of $59.21 billion, according to data compiled by the London Stock Exchange Group.

Foreign exchange rates are expected to trim reported third-quarter gross bookings growth by about one percentage point from last year, the firm said, after boosting growth over the previous four quarters.

Uber's second-quarter gross bookings of $58.02 billion topped analysts' estimates of $57.06 billion, while adjusted core earnings also exceeded expectations.

The business benefited from broad-based demand across regions and services during the quarter, including travel linked to the Fifa World Cup, Dara Khosrowshahi, right, chief executive of Uber, said.

More than 8 million tourists used Uber in the host cities during the tournament, according to the company.

Revenue rose 12 per cent to $14.19 billion, narrowly missing estimates of $14.24 billion after an accounting change in Britain reduced reported sales growth without affecting the underlying economics.

Operating expenses rose about 10 per cent in the second quarter, with spending increasing across marketing, research and administrative operations.

Uber said it added more first-time users over the past year than in any comparable period in the previous five years, helping lift gross bookings by 24 per cent.

The shares were down $4.86, or 6.8 per cent, at $67.12 by mid-afternoon in New York.

UK services sector returned to growth in July, survey shows

Mehreen Khan Economics Editor

The UK's dominant services sector returned to growth last month, recording its highest output levels since April as a new government took office.

A closely-watched survey of activity in services, which account for more than three quarters of the UK economy, rose from 48.8 to 52.1 in July, beating City forecasts of 51.8. Any number over 50 suggests expansion in output, and July's purchasing managers' index is the first growth in three months.

The rebound was driven by growing consumer spending, demand for technology services and a smaller increase in input costs faced by firms after costs peaked in April. A measure of new work rose to a five-month high, and some companies said they were investing more. The equivalent measure of activity in the eurozone rose from 49.4 to 51.7 — a five-month high for the area.

UK services firms said new business from overseas clients fell for the fifth month in a row in the aftermath of the US-Iran war. Companies warned that "elevated geopolitical uncertainties linked to the Middle East conflict were still ... a growth headwind," according to S&P Global Market Intelligence, which carries out the survey. Companies said they were cutting headcount last month, but the pace of employment loss was the slowest since last October.

The survey was carried out from July 9 to July 29, a period marked by volatile oil prices and the change of government. Martin Beck, chief UK economist at WPI Strategy, said Burnham "may have inherited an economy beginning to catch a modest tailwind".

"The drag from high interest rates, energy costs and political uncertainty may be starting to ease, creating space for some of the economy's underlying strengths to re-emerge. Private sector balance sheets remain relatively healthy, and households have scope to reduce saving, increase spending and gradually take on more credit as confidence improves."

Rob Wood, chief UK economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said July's PMI figure suggests the UK economy grew by 0.2 per cent in the third quarter. Signs of weakening price pressures and lower hiring intentions suggests interest rate rises from the Bank of England "are becoming less likely", he added.

Tim Moore, economic indices director at S&P, said: "Stronger growth projections for the year ahead partly reflected hopes of de-escalating Middle East tensions and recent signs of easing inflationary pressures. The latest increase in overall input prices was the slowest for five months and well below the peak seen in April."

Beck said sectors like leisure and hospitality had a "temporary boost" from record temperatures and the World Cup. "The survey nevertheless contained some genuinely encouraging news on inflation. Services input cost inflation remained above the norm but eased to its slowest rate since February, while firms increased their own prices at the weakest pace in five months."

Louisa Clarence-Smith

Why Microsoft's boss is reading up on the 1873 financial crash

Satya Nadella has been thinking about the 1873 global financial panic. When asked last week about the risk of an oversupply of data centres and artificial intelligence chips, the Microsoft chief executive said that "the book to read right now" is *1873: The Rothschilds, the First Great Depression, and the Making of the Modern World*. "All of us are reading this," he told analysts on an earnings call, after the software giant predicted that its investments in AI infrastructure would propel its capital spending to $175 billion in 2026.

The book, by historian and economist Liaquat Ahamed, explores the Victorian-era industrial revolution, when the Rothschild banking dynasty created the international bond market and the introduction of the railway transformed international trade. Those innovations combined began as a rational construction investment bonanza but eventually would lead to a speculative investment frenzy.

At the start of the 1870s, output in economies across western Europe was booming, and some 12,000 miles of track was being added every year to European and North American rail networks. According to Ahamed, about $3 billion was invested in the US railroad buildout from after the Civil War until 1873, of which roughly $1 billion came from Europe and $2 billion from individual investors in the US, where millions of people bought bonds in small denominations to fund rail construction projects.

The revolutionary rail expansion has drawn comparisons to the AI infrastructure investment bonanza. Last year America's biggest tech companies spent $450 billion on infrastructure. Their combined spend is expected to rise to $900 billion this year, $1.4 trillion in 2027. They have borrowed more than $400 billion this year to fund the buildout.

Back in the early 1870s, asset bubbles emerged in different countries. In Vienna, property prices doubled and redoubled, while the stock market rose by 300 per cent in three years. High stock prices were supported by rising profits and dividends at rail companies around the world.

The gilded age came to an end gradually, then suddenly. The first signs of trouble emerged in early 1873 in Austria, where a group of senior railway officials were arrested for fraud. Then, in April, the news got around that Creditanstalt, the bank run by Anselm von Rothschild, had withdrawn its deposits on the stock exchange and liquidated a large position in equities. It triggered a sell-off: bank shares on Vienna's stock market fell 45 per cent in a single day on what became known as Black Friday, the property market crashed and unemployment shot up. Many of the nouveau riche who had made fortunes in the boom went bankrupt.

Panic spread after the collapse in America of Jay Cooke & Co, financier of the Northern Pacific Railroad and a leading salesman of Union war bonds during the American Civil War. In September, Cooke was forced to announce he had run out of money, which led people to doubt whether any capital could be raised for a railroad. The New York Stock Exchange closed, investors panicked, and by the end of the year one in three railroad bonds had defaulted.

Within a year, Germany, much of Central Europe and the US fell into a recession lasting until almost the end of the decade. Lending dried up, and global prices fell by 30 per cent.

Nadella's response to concerns about building overcapacity was that Microsoft, firstly, is building in response to careful thinking about customer demand, such as geographical and product mix, as it invests heavily in AI infrastructure. Then, the company has to "build an efficient railroad", he said.

Anselm von Rothschild initiated a market sell-off in Vienna in 1873

Microsoft's AI distribution model includes Azure, its cloud division that sells computing power, data storage and AI services. The company, which previously relied on OpenAI for core AI models to power products such as its Copilot assistant, is now designing its own chips — and reaping efficiency gains of up to 40 per cent.

US tech giants are racing to achieve "superintelligence", a theoretical milestone where machines could surpass human performance. Doing so could make the AI infrastructure investments worthwhile, but some investors fear the spending won't generate the scale of demand from businesses and consumers that the hyperscalers are expecting.

Nadella admits there will be "ups and downs" in the cycle. However, he said he is "very bullish" about Microsoft's investments meeting demand at prices customers are willing to pay and delivering the profit margins the company wants.

It is reassuring that a leading figure in the AI buildout is studying history. Still, Nadella's comments are partly a symptom that investor nerves around the AI buildout are already growing.

Bearish investors are pointing to signs of trouble. Ken Griffin of Citadel last week stepped in as a rescue buyer of deflated AI stocks owned by Situational Awareness, a California-based hedge fund, after it faced margin calls from prime brokers. Hedge fund blow-ups can be a precursor to bigger financial crises, as they were in the run up to 2008.

Events leading up to 1873 remind us of the challenges of countering elements of human nature that are familiar to multiple crashes: collective psychosis; a gambling mentality; the contagion of fear. They are also a reminder of how difficult it is to predict when a bubble will burst.

Ahamed has noted that "people were declaring that there's too much money-chasing going into railroad bonds in 1871". He told a podcast: "It took another two years for the whole thing to implode ... I think we are condemned to relive this sort of episode and this sort of drama again and again ... If it happens again in the next couple of years, it won't happen for another generation. But every 25 to 30 years, we are condemned to relive this drama."

Louisa Clarence-Smith is US Business Editor of The Times

Ryan Bourne

How price controls on app stores could cost users dearly

When the last government created the Digital Markets Unit, one could envisage two futures for it. It could be a nimble watchdog, avoiding heavy Brussels-style regulation and placing Britain at the frontier of technology innovation. Or it could treat big tech platforms like utilities, smothering them in rules and redesigning popular markets according to officials' competition blueprints.

Early evidence is not encouraging. The DMU, housed within the Competition and Markets Authority, has proposed complex new price regulation for Apple's and Google's app stores. It's not quite Ofwat for apps — but the resemblance with utility-rate regulation has caught the sector off guard.

App stores' critics have long complained that developers are restricted from telling customers about other ways to subscribe to their services. Spotify, for example, must pay Apple a commission on an in-app subscription, but cannot link from the app to its own website for customers to purchase there. Regulators argue this restriction blunts competition and leaves users unaware of cheaper alternatives.

The platforms reply that app stores do more than process payments. They screen for malware, supply developer tools, handle refunds, police fraud and provide businesses with customers in a trusted marketplace. Commissions help finance that ecosystem, rather than represent pure rent. The tech giants thus dispute whether they should have to allow developers to advertise on platforms they built from scratch. Should Tesco have to let Heinz use its stores to advertise where ketchup is cheaper?

Under the DMU's plans, app developers would gain a new right to steer users towards outside websites with other payment options. To ensure Apple and Google get reimbursed for their genuine services, the tech giants could still levy a fee on purchases completed via those links. This fee, however, would be subject to CMA regulation.

Without some price controls, it is feared Apple and Google might charge so much that nobody makes use of steering. Yet cap fees too low and there's clearly less incentive for Apple and Google to invest in the integrity of their ecosystems.

To manage this tension, the CMA proposes intrusive price regulation. Apple and Google would have to parse the costs of app reviews, malware checks, software tools, fraud prevention, customer support and security, then identify which were "materially and directly" connected to completed purchases.

CMA officials would then decide how much common investment could be recovered, what profit was reasonable, how much value arose from platform trust, how much reflected market power and how much app developers collectively contributed themselves.

That sounds like a technocratic nightmare. Price fixing is hazardous enough for something tangible like water passing through pipes. It is vastly harder in a sector built on intangible assets, software and trust, where each app draws different value from the platform.

Lawyers, accountants and economists will have a field day. Whether consumers benefit is less clear. True, they may get some cheaper subscription options, at least if developers don't pocket most of the difference. A low fee, though, could also lead to Apple and Google investing less in the payment infrastructure that consumers trust.

Consumers highly value these features. A recent Public First poll, albeit commissioned by the tech industry's trade body, found that many more respondents prioritised secure payments (45 per cent) and fraud protection (39 per cent), compared with lower prices for buying apps or subscriptions online. The CMA's own 2025 survey found users cited convenience, choice, security and privacy far more frequently than affordability.

Here then is a successful sector, built over years to foster consumer trust, that is now threatened with regulatory redesign based on the CMA's preconceptions about competition. Britain has no shortage of genuinely broken customer experiences. Regulating this seems a strange priority.

Ryan Bourne is an economist at the Cato Institute and editor of the book The War on Prices

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Coca-Cola HBC has the rights to bottle and sell Coke products in 28 countries across the continents of Europe and Africa

Coca-Cola HBC raises sales forecast after strong first half

Jessica Newman

One of Coca-Cola's biggest global bottlers raised its profit expectations after the World Cup put a rocket under sales of sports energy drinks.

Coca-Cola HBC, which has exclusive rights to bottle and sell Coke's products in 28 countries across Europe and Africa, said the American brand's sponsorship of the tournament lifted revenue and profit in the first half of the year.

The FTSE 100 company posted a 9.6 per cent increase in organic revenue to €6.2 billion, as volumes grew 7.5 per cent.

Volumes of energy drinks sold, which include Powerade and Monster Energy, jumped 26.1 per cent, while sparkling drink volumes rose 6.4 per cent.

Operating profit increased 15.9 per cent to €746.9 million.

Partnerships such as the one for the World Cup, which offered special-edition Coca-Cola and Powerade packs, tend to have a lasting impact beyond the event, Zoran Bogdanovic, the chief executive of Coca-Cola HBC, said.

He added that the company had seen resilience in consumer sentiment, even as some markets showed signs of sensitivity and most other consumer goods companies flagged softer consumer trends.

Rising inflation, commodity and energy costs stemming from the Iran war have also prompted businesses to hedge against swings.

Coca-Cola HBC is 85 per cent hedged on key commodities, which include sugar, aluminium, aluminium premium, gas oil, corn and plastics.

The company now expects organic operating profit growth of between 8 per cent and 10 per cent this year, compared to a previous guidance range of 7 per cent to 10 per cent. It forecast annual organic revenue growth at around the top end of its guidance range of 6 per cent to 7 per cent.

Coca-Cola HBC, based in Switzerland, was created in its present form from the merger in 2000 of the Hellenic Bottling Company and the London-listed business Coca-Cola Beverages.

The biggest shareholders in the business are The Coca-Cola Company, with a 21.5 per cent stake, according to FactSet, alongside the Greek-Cypriot Leventis family, which has 23.4 per cent.

When Coca-Cola HBC moved its main stock market listing from Athens to London in 2013, the shares kicked off at £17.50. On the back of yesterday's announcement, they closed up 189p, or 4 per cent, at £50.15.

UK drinkers help lift Heineken profits

Jessica Newman
Leisure Industries Correspondent

Strong sales of Spanish lager Cruzcampo and Irish stout Murphy's in the UK have helped Heineken deliver better-than-expected profits in the first half of the year.

The world's second-largest brewer said UK volumes of Cruzcampo jumped by more than 30 per cent in the six months to the end of June, helped by the launch of the "Sevilla Orange" flavour, which it said was attracting new customers. Meanwhile, Murphy's, which has become popular as a cheaper alternative to Guinness, doubled volumes thanks to increased sales in pubs and bars, as well as the launch of its cans in supermarkets and off-licences.

Overall, total consolidated volumes were up 0.9 per cent in the period, better than the small decline the City had forecast. Organic revenues increased 2.4 per cent to €17.5 billion, driven by the Asia-Pacific region, which was ahead of analysts' estimates. Heineken's organic operating profit also surpassed the City's expectations, rising by 6.7 per cent to €2.2 billion.

The company credited its performance on the strength of low and non-alcoholic brands, which grew across every region in the first half. It also cited a step-up in investment into its top global brands, which include Amstel, Birra Moretti and Desperados.

Heineken reiterated its full-year guidance of delivering operating profit growth of between 2 and 6 per cent. Analysts at Jefferies were not surprised by the lack of guidance upgrades, given continuing geopolitical uncertainty and the fact that Rafa Oliveira starts as chief executive in October.

Heineken said it had pushed ahead with efficiency initiatives, cutting about 3,000 full-time jobs, which is about half of the overall reductions targeted as part of a two-year restructuring plan.

Dolf van den Brink, the chief executive who stood down at the end of May, announced the job cuts in February as the company sought to tackle weak beer demand across the industry.

Harold van den Broek, Heineken's finance boss, said the cuts were "enterprise-wide" and resulted from initiatives across breweries, the supply chain, head office and individual markets, with Europe a "big component".

"It will be no surprise that the more we're going through this process, the more opportunities we're also trying to uncover," he said.

The cuts have helped put Heineken on track to achieve cost savings at the "top end" of its target range of €400 million to €500 million.

Laurence Whyatt, an analyst at Barclays, said Heineken's swift cost-cutting had boosted confidence in its performance despite weakness in key markets in the Americas, where it lost market share.

The market has put its faith in Oliveira, not only to oversee the rest of the company's restructuring, but also revive sales volumes.

While major brewers have been struggling to sell more beer as they grapple with higher costs and lower demand, Heineken has frustrated some investors with its volatile performance and for lagging behind its bigger rival Anheuser-Busch InBev in efficiency.

Oliveira was announced as van den Brink's successor in July. Previously, he was the boss of JDE Peet's, the Dutch coffee and tea maker. The appointment was welcomed by analysts, who argued that Oliveira's strong background in consumer goods and earlier experience in capital markets gave him an edge as he looked to deliver returns for some dissatisfied investors.

Heineken's shares, up 14 per cent since the start of the year, closed up 2 per cent to €79.40 yesterday.

Meet the Writer: An evening with William Boyd

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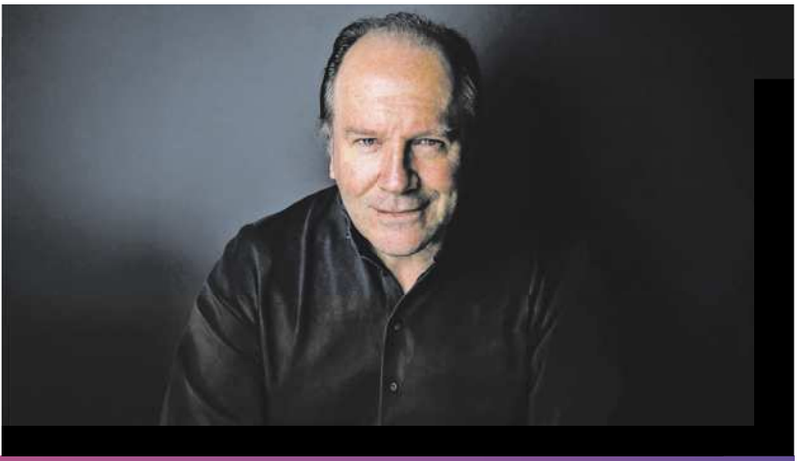

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The sun continues to shine for Next

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

Sunny British weather and increased marketing efforts helped Next to deliver better-than-expected sales in the latest quarter and to boost its full-year profit forecast again.

Shares in the FTSE 100 clothing and homeware chain closed up 850p, or 5.7 per cent, at £156.60 after it posted a 9.2 per cent rise in full-price sales in the three months to August 1, more than double the 4 per cent it had estimated.

The retailer said the performance was boosted by a mixture of warm weather in the UK, a rebound in demand in the Middle East and northern Europe following a weaker first quarter, and its ability to increase spending on profitable marketing activity.

Demand was particularly strong for Next's virtual department store, Label, which sells a range of brands and organises the logistics for many of them. Sales in the division rose 13.2 per cent.

On the back of the strong performance, Next said it now expects full-year profits to be £1.24 billion, up 7.3 per cent on last year and £25 million higher than previous forecasts. Of the upgrade, Next said £15 million came from the additional sales during the quarter, while a further £10 million reflected a stronger than expected performance from the group's equity investments.

The upgraded guidance means Next expects full-price sales of £6 billion for the full year, up 6.3 per cent. Total group sales are forecast to reach £7.5 billion.

International business was the primary growth driver during the period, propelled by online sales overseas surging 36.9 per cent in the second quarter and 23.9 per cent across the first half. UK sales posted a modest 2.8 per cent quarterly gain, while physical retail store revenues remained virtually unchanged, slipping just 0.3 per cent.

Next cautioned that overseas growth will cool in the second half due to tougher year-on-year comparisons following last year's restructuring of its European distribution network. Nevertheless, it maintained a positive outlook, projecting a 14 per cent increase in international sales for the period.

Louise Déglise-Favre at GlobalData said: "Within the UK online channel, Label significantly outperformed, with full-price sales rising 13.2 per cent, highlighting how [third-party] brand selection is one of Next's strengths. However, Next's own brand online sales fell 1.2 per cent in the quarter, which should alert the retailer to pay close attention to its own proposition."

David Hughes at Shore Capital noted: "While some of the recent growth may be attributed to one-off factors such as hotter weather and pent-up demand, the stronger return on marketing speaks to continued opportunity internationally ... This guidance looks once again on the conservative side to us, leaving scope for further beats down the line."

Next has been a consistent performer on the UK high street, despite the wider challenges affecting rivals. It has upgraded its profit forecast three times this current financial year, cementing Lord Wolfson of Aspley Guise's reputation as a boss who consistently underpromises and over-delivers.

Wolfson, the company's and the FTSE 100's longest-serving chief executive, who has been in the job since August 2001, is widely acknowledged as having adapted well to major changes such as the shift to online shopping, while other big-name retailers have disappeared from the high street.

Wolfson marked 25 years as chief executive of Next last weekend — serving for 18 years and 10 months longer than the average FTSE 100 boss.

Next said its earnings guidance assumes it will complete £524 million of share buybacks this year, £14 million higher than its previous guidance.

John Lewis boss gives warning

The boss of the John Lewis Partnership has warned profits will be squeezed by lower sales as the store chain battles "really tough" trading conditions.

Jason Tarry, chairman of the employee-owned group that also owns Waitrose, told staff John Lewis was operating in a retail environment where it "will trade into lower sales and higher costs ...We have to adjust for an immediate future we weren't expecting even six months ago, let alone a couple of years ago," he said in an interview with the house magazine, seen by the FT.

"The team is heavily focused at the moment on what that means for us in terms of adjusting our plan going forward."

Tarry told employees the group is seeking to boost profits while sales are being squeezed.

John Lewis is undergoing a turnaround under Jason Tarry, chairman of the employee-owned group

"It is difficult when things are tough from a sales perspective, but we're holding our nerve around our focus on margin improvement and firm stock control, rather than just trying to chase top-line sales."

John Lewis, which operates 34 department stores, is undergoing a turnaround under Tarry and executive director Peter Ruis. The group is betting on fast-growing categories such as beauty, fragrance and hospitality to reinvigorate its offering.

It follows a difficult few years for the company, which faces stiff competition from discounters and online retailers, with department store footfall under pressure. Its cost-cutting programme, including closures and bonus cuts, was unpopular with staff and customers alike.

Tarry was asked when the turnaround would be complete, to which he replied: "My honest counsel to anyone asking when it will end is that it will never end."

This year, the group paid a 2 per cent bonus to its 66,000 workers for the first time in four years. It was a far cry from the 24 per cent staff got in the 1980s.

The group posted a profit before tax and exceptional items of £134 million for the year to the end of January, up from £126 million a year earlier. But it swung to a statutory loss before tax of £21 million, compared with a £97 million profit the previous year, after one-off charges including a writedown of old technology.

Sales rose 5 per cent to £13.4 billion. Most growth came from Waitrose, where sales climbed 7 per cent to £8.5 billion. The department store arm reported sales growth of 3 per cent to £4.9 billion.

Toy Story comes to Disney's rescue

Louisa Clarence-Smith
US Business Editor

Disney said the blockbuster success of *Toy Story 5* helped drive higher quarterly revenues as the film also attracted theme park visitors and boosted merchandise sales.

Toy Story 5, starring Tom Hanks and Tim Allen, has surpassed $1 billion at the global box office, helping to boost Disney's revenue in the June quarter to $25.2 billion, up 7 per cent year-on-year. Operating income rose 21 per cent to $5.6 billion, beating forecasts of $5.2 billion.

Josh D'Amaro, who took over from Bob Iger as chief executive in March, said Toy Story merchandise helped the company deliver its strongest quarter of year-over-year growth in consumer products revenue in five years, while boosting visitors to theme parks and cruise ships.

Tim Allen is the voice of Buzz Lightyear in Toy Story 5

Together, the five Toy Story films have delivered more than $4 billion in global box office and more than two billion hours streamed on Disney+.

While other films such as *Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu* "did not meet our box office expectations" said D'Amaro, it still drove higher retail sales for the Star Wars franchise and attracted guests to theme parks.

The live-action *Moana* also underperformed, said D'Amaro, but like the latest Star Wars instalment, investment in the film contributed to merchandise sales and drove people to theme parks.

Disney's parks and experiences division reported revenue of nearly $10 billion, up 10 per cent from a year ago, fuelled by a 4 per cent increase in attendance at its parks globally and a 3 per cent increase at its domestic parks.

The results came as a surprise to investors after Comcast warned of softening visitor trends at its Universal parks in Orlando, Florida, due to higher fuel prices and weak consumer sentiment.

Disney's entertainment group reported $11.3 billion in revenue for the quarter, a gain of 6 per cent from a year earlier. Operating income for the division rose 64 per cent to nearly $1.7 billion.

4imprint shares climb after 'solid' showing in first half

Jessica Newman

A London-listed seller of promotional merchandise has upgraded its annual profit and sales forecasts after a "solid" performance in the first half of the year.

Shares in 4imprint Group closed up 500p, or 11.4 per cent, at £48.90 yesterday after it said it expected revenues for the year to the end of December to come in "slightly above" the $1.35 billion delivered last year.

The FTSE 250 company said adjusted pre-tax profits are expected to hit around $130 million, surpassing City analysts' forecasts. This was despite pre-tax profits falling 19 per cent to $59.6 million in the six months to June 27, which it attributed to lower gross profit margins amid tariff-related supplier costs. Revenues inched up to $666.4 million, slightly above the $659.4 million generated in the same period the prior year as the company managed to bring in new customers.

With a total of over one million orders in the period, which was a 1 per cent decrease from the same six months a year earlier, the average value per order improved 3 per cent as a result of "carefully considered price adjustments."

Jessica Pok, an equity research analyst at Peel Hunt, said: "We see a double positive of improving trading conditions and effective cost management. With significant cash building up, there remains potential for additional shareholder returns."

Business

How Manchester's rise may be blueprint for Burnham

A former wasteland, MediaCity in Salford is now a creative hub for 250 businesses, writes **James Hurley**

The rapid ascension of Andy Burnham to No 10 means Manchester is once again the centre of the universe. Or at least it certainly feels that way. Much like it did in the 1800s when the city was so integral to the global cotton industry it earned the nickname Cottonopolis.

Back then, the Manchester docks, to the southwest of the city centre, would have been a hive of activity, with ships loaded with spices, sugar and, of course, raw cotton.

That lasted up to the 1970s, when the docks went into a rapid decline as the bigger modern ships could no longer navigate the Manchester Ship Canal. When the last docks closed in 1982, the site was deserted.

Head back up there today, though, and the buzz is back. Not from dockers but from the broadcasters, podcasters and influencers based in MediaCity. Opened 15 years ago on what was the old docks-cum-wasteland, it is now a hub for creatives, owned by Land Securities, the FTSE 100 landlord. Last year more than 50,000 hours of content were created at MediaCity, including productions of *Match of the Day*, *Countdown*, *The Voice* and *Coronation Street*.

It was the BBC that first moved up there in 2011, with BBC Sport, *BBC Breakfast* and CBeebies all part of the great migration north. Alice Webb, then the chief operating officer of BBC North, was tasked with overseeing the move. It was not easy.

"It was — and still is — the largest relocation of any organisation of that size," she says, as we stand on top of MediaCity Studios and look out over the canal towards Old Trafford, Manchester United's ground.

"We were asking 1,500 people to pick up their lives and their families. About 50 per cent of people came with their jobs, which was an extraordinary number. Go and find any relocation over that distance, and that scale, where people moved in that number."

It was last September when Landsec asked her to go from tenant to landlord and become chief executive of MediaCity. Her background meant that few people knew and understood the area better than she did.

Webb leads us back down the stairs from the roof and into what she calls the site's "engine" — a maze of studios, editing suites and production galleries.

In one of these studios the BBC filmed much of its World Cup programming, although most of the set has now been cleared. Some argued that Gabby Logan, Wayne Rooney and co should have followed ITV and based themselves closer to the action in America. Webb disagrees.

"I think the BBC made a very sensible and quite an enlightened decision," she says. "Just the cost of sending 250 or 300 people out to the States, would that have been the right decision for licence fee payers' money?"

It would not have looked like such a smart move if the technology failed, but Webb insists that would never have happened. She shows me through another door and into a room that is filled with racks and racks of servers. If you have ever visited a data centre, this is what it feels like: air-conditioned, with a loud hum of fans and generators.

For the World Cup matches there were 100 or so "feeds" — cameras and microphones — being sent back from North America and into MediaCity's 20 million metres of fibre-optic cables.

"Would you rather be in an outside

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Beazley profits down 53% ahead of Zurich takeover

Emma Powell

The Lloyd's of London insurer set to be taken over by Zurich has warned of "a heightened risk environment" and "softening" rates, as its profits halved.

Beazley reported a 53 per cent decline in its pre-tax profit to $238 million during the first half of the year, as its investment returns took a hit from increased market volatility.

The FTSE 100 group said its political violence and marine war books had been impacted by geopolitical turmoil, while wildfires, flooding and extreme storms had caused the "risk environment" for its property business to increase and the size of claims to rise.

The combined operating ratio, a key performance metric, rose to a less profitable 93.3 per cent, from 84.9 per cent a year earlier. Net written premiums were down 6 per cent at $2.4 billion.

Adrian Cox, Beazley's chief executive, said the group had "seen a return to an active large loss environment, compared to the more benign experience seen in recent years".

In March it agreed to a sweetened £8 billion bid from Zurich after five previous offers were rejected by the board, who argued that they undervalued the insurer. The deal is expected to be completed before the end of the year.

Beazley was founded in 1986 with just a handful of desks and has grown to become one of the world's biggest specialist insurers, focusing on everything from cybersecurity and satellites to fine art and pleasure yachts.

Zurich is Switzerland's biggest insurer, operating in general and life assurance, employing 55,000 people worldwide, including 4,500 in the UK, and weighing in at SwFr91.7 billion, about ten times the value of Beazley.

The shares closed down by 1p, or 0.1 per cent, at £12.90 yesterday.

MARK WAUGH/MANCHESTER PRESS

attracted broadcasters, podcasters and influencers to the former wasteland

broadcast truck in Miami with the lightning striking, or would you rather be here?" Webb, 53, asks.

We keep walking and bump into a polite American man in a suit. Webb says he is here for the new series of *Wordle*. An American game show being filmed in Salford? Apparently it is quite common for foreign productions to film over here. MediaCity can provide them with just the physical space, or it can also help them find crew, too.

"The price point in America is much more expensive, sometimes two or three times more," Webb explains. "Plus, we've got everything here — post-production [facilities], hotels and a really deep pool of skills. The UK's creative industry is amazing."

MediaCity is home to over 250 businesses, ranging from the BBC and ITV to start-ups and one-man bands. About three quarters of them have something to do with film and television.

There are all the usual production houses and prop-makers, but we also walk past the office of a chap who sells anti-glare eyeglasses so we can still see the eyes of the "talent" despite all the stage lighting.

There are plenty of businesses that have nothing to do with the creative industries, but just want to be among it in MediaCity. Next to the new CBeebies set, for example, an insurance company has just moved in, and the co-working space is full of people on laptops and video calls as we wander through.

Webb says MediaCity is more than just a place for work; she prefers to call it a "neighbourhood". There are restaurants, coffee shops, bars and more than 1,000 flats. At the front of the main building, an army of contractors are packing away the World Cup fanzone where thousands watched the football.

"Twenty years ago this was muddy wasteland," she says. "Now we're this amazing mixed-use site — and it's my privilege to be responsible for it all."

In total, the site is about 38 acres, but only half of that has been built on. Webb wants to expand. "We've only just started really," she says. "We've got lots of space to keep growing." Any new developments will be "more of the same" with a continued focus on creative and digital "because they are two of the fastest-growing sectors in our economy".

From a standing start, MediaCity has established itself as a genuine creative hub. Webb has been fielding calls from some of her peers who are interested in moving parts of their organisations and trying to set up their own TechnologyCity or FinanceCity. "There wasn't a blueprint when we set up MediaCity, but there is now, arguably."

Of course, not every industry has an organisation like the BBC taking the first step. Webb says that was "incredibly helpful" in putting MediaCity on the map but feels it would still have been a success, because of where it is.

"Greater Manchester already had a strong creative industries sector prior to the BBC move," she says. "Plus there is a level of stability here and there has been for years, going back to before Andy [Burnham]. We know that businesses thrive on stability; it's why Landsec has invested £1.2 billion in the North West over the past 18 months.

"There is a very clear growth strategy, and the [Greater Manchester] combined authority is staffed by ex-investment bankers who understand what it is to do business."

Her best advice for cities or industries wanting to set up their own hubs from scratch? Believe.

"There's always a million reasons not to do something. If the BBC listened to all of the reasons why it'd never be able to employ anybody up here, or why nobody would come up for *BBC Breakfast* ... it's very hard for people to imagine something they don't already know."

Housing market slump pushes Ibstock to a loss

Guy Taylor

Britain's biggest brickmaker has swung to a loss and cut dividends sharply as it counted the cost of a "subdued" housing and construction market.

Ibstock reported pre-tax losses of £27 million for the six months ending June 30, down from a profit of £8 million in the same period a year ago, as price increases failed to offset slower demand and cost headwinds from the Iran war. The results also reflected a £25 million non-cash impairment charge taken on some mothballed "soft mud" facilities — a process that produces handmade-style clay bricks.

The London-listed company warned yesterday that activity in private housebuilding and the market for repairs, maintenance and improvement was expected to "remain challenging in the near term."

The shares closed down 4¾p, or 4.7 per cent, at 93¼p yesterday, adding to a decline of more than a third over the past year. Since the onset of the pandemic, the stock has fallen by about 65 per cent, giving the company a market valuation of about £380 million.

Ibstock, which supplies all manner of clay and concrete products including bricks, roof tiles, flooring and bollards, is currently the second-most shorted stock in London as hedge funds bet against the British housing and construction markets.

The latest figures from the Financial Conduct Authority show aggregated net short positions totalling 17.91 per cent against the stock, behind only the struggling housebuilder Vistry.

The company's clay-brick operations encompass 15 manufacturing sites served by 15 active quarries across the UK. In concrete, which includes walling, fencing and lintels and rail and infrastructure products, the company operates from 11 manufacturing sites.

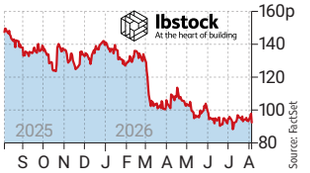
Renewed cost pressures and the prospect of higher-for-longer interest rates amid the conflict in the Middle East have further clouded sentiment, given the potential implications for the British housing market. For the full-year, earnings before deductions are expected to be at the lower end of an analyst consensus of between £59 million and £68 million.

Ibstock said it remained "mindful of the potential near-term effects" that both the Iran war and the change in prime minister in the UK might have on consumer confidence and the wider construction sector.

"Whilst volatility persists, we will continue to focus on managing capacity, inventory levels and costs and will adapt plans to market conditions," it said.

On an adjusted basis, earnings before deductions fell by more than a quarter to £26 million, with margins also shrinking. Revenue declined 15.1 per cent to £164 million over the half-year, while interim dividends were cut by two thirds to 0.5p.

Share price



Joe Hudson, the chief executive, described the first-half as "solid" against a "challenging" market backdrop, adding that the company would continue to "adapt capacity, inventory levels and costs to market conditions."

Analysts at Peel Hunt said the results were "as expected", albeit noting that revenue and pre-tax earnings had dropped "materially".

"The group continues to pull strategic levers to improve performance, but soft market volumes continue to consume these gains. When volumes recover, Ibstock's operational gearing should drive a quick improvement in profitability," they said.

Private equity firms circle London-listed Bodycote

Robert Miller

Bodycote said yesterday it had received separate takeover proposals from private equity firms CVC Advisers and Veritas Capital, valuing the thermal processing services provider at about £1.56 billion.

The London-listed company said it would be minded to recommend either if talks lead to a firm bid. The shares closed up 173p, or 23.1 per cent, at 923p, valuing the business at £1.6 billion.

CVC's proposal values the company at up to 915p a share, narrowly above Veritas's 914p-a-share approach, Bodycote said.

Both include cash consideration and an interim dividend for 2026.

Bodycote said it had "carefully considered" the proposals with its advisers. In both cases, it has concluded that each proposal is at a value that its board "would be minded to recommend unanimously" to shareholders, should CVC or Veritas express the intention to make a firm offer.

Bodycote has provided both CVC and Veritas with access to confirmatory due diligence, it added.

CVC declined to comment, while Veritas did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In June, Apollo Global Management, the US asset manager, dropped its 885p-a-share, or £1.52 billion, bid for Bodycote. After the US firm walked away, the company said its board had "strong confidence in Bodycote's potential and its strategy to create a high-performing, resilient business with attractive growth prospects". It added that the business had made a "positive start to 2026 trading".

Bodycote reported core revenue growth of 9 per cent for the first four months of the year, compared with a 5 per cent decline a year earlier.

Flutter boss steps down amid US woes

Jessica Newman
Leisure Industries Correspondent

Peter Jackson is to step down as chief executive of Flutter Entertainment at the end of next month after nine years at the world's largest gambling firm.

Jackson, who has spearheaded Flutter's push into America, will be replaced by Dan Taylor, who is chief executive of the company's international division.

Taylor assumed the expanded role of Flutter president in May, with responsibility for overseeing the group's underperforming US operations following the departure of Amy Howe as head of its market-leading FanDuel brand.

He has been with Flutter for more than a decade and was in charge of its main UK Paddy Power Betfair brands between 2018 and 2020 before becoming head of all non-US operations, where he oversaw a number of big acquisitions in Italy and Brazil.

John Bryant, Flutter's chairman, said Taylor has an "outstanding track record of delivering results, building high-performing teams and leading complex international businesses".

Under Jackson, Flutter shifted its primary listing from London to New York in 2024 in an attempt to capitalise on the nascent US gambling market.

However, Taylor will be tasked with reversing fortunes at its FanDuel sportsbook business, which had been growing rapidly until last year, while seeing off the threat posed by dominant prediction market players such as Polymarket and Kalshi, which effectively allow people to bet on everything from geopolitics to commodities and culture — as well as sports.

$4.3bn
Flutter's second-quarter revenues

Flutter's shares, which have tumbled almost 70 per cent in the past 12 months, lost a further 12 per cent to $92.75 in afternoon trading yesterday after warning increased investment would hurt near-term profits.

Alongside the leadership change, the Betfair owner said that "proactive" spending on FanDuel and other investments in customer acquisition and retention will result in a "reduction in near-term profitability".

As a result, the company is now forecasting a 7 per cent fall in full-year core profit to $2.65 billion, below the $2.87 billion it flagged in May and $2.79 billion expected by analysts. The planned investments are expected to hit profit by $270 million. It also estimates annual revenues will reduce by $395 million to $17.9 billion.

In a letter to shareholders, Jackson said: "Our momentum and the current market dynamics mean now's the right time to move from a focus on margin growth, to prioritising average monthly players growth and customer value."

Flutter generated second-quarter revenues of $4.3 billion, up from $4.2 billion last year, despite monthly player figures dropping 11 per cent.

Business

The Times unit trust information service

ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS
Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Strategic Bond Fund ‡	130.74		+0.47	8.06
UK Equity A ‡	399.31		+2.51	3.95
UK Growth ‡	10369.5		+122.36	2.23

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS
0800 092 2051

Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Income Fund R Acc ‡	379.69		+5.65	...
Global Income Fund R Inc ‡	213.52		+3.18	...
Global Select Fund R ‡	228.03		+2.35	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	67.99		+0.19	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	814.25		+3.56	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	312.09		+1.37	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	91.92		+0.72	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡	897.87		+2.38	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡	689.13		+10.28	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡	4272.26		-13.21	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	93.98		...	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	116.62		+0.42	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	52.72		+0.19	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	116.42		+0.42	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	52.59		+0.19	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1343.42		+12.38	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2348.38		+34.30	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1107.49		+8.14	...

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT
Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients:0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Health ‡	3263		...	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2157		+10.00	1.15
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	327.8		+3.60	0.38
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	238.5		+1.50	1.15

AXA FUND MANAGERS
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808

UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.1		...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.3		...	1.51

CIS UNIT MANAGERS
08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Growth ‡	297.10		...	1.14
Sus Leaders ‡	1033		-0.29	1.48
UK Growth ‡@	880.40		...	1.71
UK Income ‡@	259.80		...	3.92

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT
Dealing 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	5513.68		...	0.62

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083

Share Class 1-Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1611		+6	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	596.3		-1.3	2.70
Global Gwth SCI ‡	403.6		+5.3	...
Strategic Bd ‡	228.8		+0.8	3.90

EDENTREE INV MGMT
0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡	498		+3.00	1.77
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis ‡	462.6		+2.80	0.55
Sust Mgd Income ‡	142.4		+0.20	4.72
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡	85.47		+0.37	4.98
Sust UK Eqty A Dis ‡@	257.2		+2.30	1.63
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis ‡	327.8		+3.60	1.42

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL
Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec ‡	2938		...	...
American ‡	8080		...	...
Euro Opps ‡	739.5		...	0.48
European ‡	4409		...	0.77
Global Focus ‡	3718		...	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡	22.36		...	6.58
Global Special Sits ‡	9027		...	...
Japan ‡	989.1		...	0.34
Moneybldr Bal ‡	48.8		...	0.60
Moneybldr Inc ‡	28.29		...	5.29
Moneybldr UK Ind ‡	201.73		...	2.48
Special Sits ‡	7452		...	1.66
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡	106.5		...	1.42

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS
01296 386 386

Authorised Inv Funds

Share Class C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡	37.49		...	4.50
Intl Gwth ‡	216.2		...	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	108.3		...	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	120.3		...	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)
Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Frid:8-6

HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1643		+28	0.77
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1863		+6	2.28
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1079		+3	2.33
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	442.6		+0.4	2.50
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	179.7		+0.2	2.65
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	408.1		+4.2	2.88
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	221.3		+2.3	2.86
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1109		-2	2.66
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	498.7		-1.1	2.80
Japan Ind Acc ‡	235.1		+5.2	1.44
Japan Ind Inc ‡	170.5		+3.8	1.48
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	1058		+25	1.57
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	598.5		+14.1	1.59

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	312.8		+1.3	4.20
Income Acc ‡	1062		...	3.28
Income Inc ‡@	400.3		-1.1	3.33
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.4		...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	155.9		...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	224.5		-0.2	2.99
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv ‡@	87.03		-0.09	3.06

HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Inc ‡	1265		+21	0.76

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD
Dling:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677

Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121

Invesco Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond ‡	232.62		...	4.00
High Income Dis ‡	434.91		...	3.14
Income & Growth Dis ‡	508.9		...	3.09
Income Inc ‡	1676.1		...	2.89
Money Acc ‡	107.79		...	3.62
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	92.48		...	5.78
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1392.21		...	1.47
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1365.44		...	1.42

INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900

OEIC Series I, ii,iii & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡	875.43		+6.18	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡	472.1		+2.98	2.61
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	269.92		+1.71	2.48
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡	330.69		+2.81	0.21
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	121.64		+1.03	0.95
Diversified Income A Acc ‡	377.24		+1.58	3.77
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.93		+0.28	5.19
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Ac ‡	144.44		+0.6	5.97
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡	66.91		+0.28	7.66
Emerging Mkts Equity A Ac ‡	292.43		+4.79	0.04
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡	241.79		+21.6	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	305.13		+4.12	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	404.16		+1.92	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡	2122.19		+25.39	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	502.13		+21.26	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡	528.18		+6.8	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡	405.21		+5.22	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡	2748.97		+32.36	1.03
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡	945.4		+11.13	1.04

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)
JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS
Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Dlng:0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	114.1		...	4.40
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	98.62		...	5.40
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡	359.2		...	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	154.1		...	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1342		...	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡	304.6		...	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3251		...	0.20
Fix IntMnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	33.23		...	6.10
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6590		...	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡	89.02		...	2.40
Global Tech A Acc ‡	7176		...	...
Instl UK Idx Opps A Acc ‡	178.7606		...	2.20
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	187.2		...	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	338.9		+3.6	1.70
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	163.1		...	2.70
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡	233.6		...	2.70
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	230.7		...	4.40
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	55.71		...	4.40
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	95.72		...	5.80
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	206.8		...	1.20
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	200.7		...	1.30
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	3058		...	...

J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT
OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡@	8708.9000		-1.3000	2.50

JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD
020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Distribution & Growth ‡	125.26		+0.9574	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	598.09		+0.3447	0.71
European ‡	3980.3		+0.3474	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1351.8		+0.7734	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC	428.05		+0.5222	3.39
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	345.49		+0.6064	2.26
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	833.03		+1.2032	0.20
Merlin Inc Acc ‡@	470.28		+0.7914	3.47
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	609.46		+1.3694	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡	295.97		+0.5473	1.75
UK Growth ‡	284.79		+0.4852	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	1022.17		+0.0553	4.58

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANGRS) LTD
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Ind Acc ‡	814.5000		+230.0000	200.00
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	486.4000		+140.0000	200.00
Fixed Int Acc ‡	150.8000		+70.0000	460.00
Fixed Int Dist ‡@	62.3300		+29.0000	460.00
Global Health ‡	122.5		+1.4	1.00
Glob Tech Acc ‡	241.8		+5.3	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	154.0000		+30.0000	580.00
Japan Ind Acc ‡	112.9000		+230.0000	130.00
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	416.3000		+1050.0000	140.00
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	538.2000		-110.0000	250.00
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	233.0000		-50.0000	250.00
US Ind Acc ‡@	1439		+21	0.50
Worldwide Acc ‡	471.9000		+350.0000	90.00

M&G SECURITIES
Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196

Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1895.18		-0.4695	5.07

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	828.38		-0.5343	5.09
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	67.36		+0.5523	4.37
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	39.77		+0.2268	6.25
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	102.06		+0.9296	1.55
Index Trckr Inc ‡	104.57		-0.2004	3.01
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	25.36		+0.158	4.25
UK Select A Inc ‡	3286.37		+0.2957	2.66

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.95		+0.488	5.00
Dividend Inc ‡	66.45		-0.7172	5.38
Recovery A Inc ‡	141.32		-0.0142	2.87
Sml Cos Inc ‡	364.66		+1.5709	2.81

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡	162.25		+0.6826	3.90

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST
0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income ‡	86.94		...	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	296.7		...	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	719.1		...	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	323.5		...	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	480.9		...	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1100.1		...	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc ‡@	1392		...	0.20
Worldwide Mgd Acc ‡@	741.2		...	0.20

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT
Enquiries: 0800 0961 962

The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)

Class A Shares

Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40		...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65		...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69		...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53		...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.68		...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.88		...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12		...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45		...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1106.76		...	4.31
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1743.57		...	4.28
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1170.11		...	4.40
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	14252.91		...	0.32
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	1644.92		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1753.35		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	3833.57		...	0.32
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡	1547.08		...	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡	1514.16		...	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡	1556.09		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1541.74		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡	1572.48		...	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	144.96		...	4.74
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	98.3		...	4.78
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1384.4		...	4.69
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3066.84		...	4.59
US Adv F F Acc ‡	2453.39		...	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	1470.68		...	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2583.29		...	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	1522.74		...	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS
08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc Inc ‡	243.1		...	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr ‡	230.8000		...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	654.7		...	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	314.3		...	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD
0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Far Eastern Inc	617.0700	649.4700	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1375.2000	1451.4000	+23.75	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.4900	1508.7000	...	7.81
UK Equity Inc	562.2300	593.3800	...	7.81

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS
0845 300 2244

Overseas Growth Investment Funds

Tracker & Special Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	608.2		+5.10	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	276.8		+2.30	2.50

UK & Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	330.0		+1.20	4.00
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	108.2		+0.40	4.00
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	474.9		+7.20	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	298.0		+0.50	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	70.22		+0.13	6.40
Hi Res A Acc ‡	561.7		+1.60	3.70
Hi Res A Inc ‡	152.0		+0.40	3.80
Strat In A Acc ‡@	229.2		-0.40	4.50
Strat In A Inc ‡@	86.32		-0.18	4.50
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	136.1		+0.50	2.50

OEIC B Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	673.8		+5.60	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	275.2		+2.30	2.60

OEIC C Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	132.9		+0.40	2.60

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS
0845 279 3003

Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	98.75		...	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	51.26		...	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	108.90		...	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	296.20		...	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	202.3		...	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	266.60		...	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	185.70		...	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	48.06		...	...
Managed Acc ‡	532.4		...	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	258.40		...	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	818.50		...	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS
Enquiries:0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡	186.79		...	2.02
Blanced A Inc ‡	158.08		...	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	133.49		...	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	105.58		...	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	499.48		...	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	437.01		...	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	493.01		...	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	319.65		...	2.17

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Client Serv: 0800 0684000

Retail Shares Class 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡	39.489		+4.76	4.64
Threadneedle Monthly Etr Inc Inc ‡	101.8753		+33.24	2.73
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Bd Inc ‡	95.0674		+24.47	4.27
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Acc ‡	54.9985		+24.38	3.94
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡	39.7642		+19.14	4.15
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡	42.0375		+13.32	3.80
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡	120.0787		+67.22	3.49
Threadneedle UK Growth & Inc Rtl Inc ‡	113.2574		+58.11	3.19
Threadneedle UK Instl Rtl ‡	249.8583		-8.72	1.34
Threadneedle UK MntHy Inc Rtl Inc ‡	90.1092		+36.61	3.00
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡	166.8517		+32.96	1.33
Threadneedle U Smaller Cons Rtl Inc ‡	403.4924		+506.48	0.39

For Resolution see Ignis

TU FUND MANAGERS LTD

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis	1006	1006	...	1.22

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); ‡ Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

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British funds

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73,08	63,68	Tr IL 0 ½% 50	64,86	+.17	0,77	2,47
66,33	57,06	Tr IL 0 ½% 52	58,03	+.20	0,43	2,47
101,91	97,20	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 28	99,42	-.02	0,13	0,41
100,99	97,18	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 29	98,33	-.04	0,13	0,77
98,49	94,73	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 31	95,73	+.02	0,13	1,00
88,33	82,97	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 36	83,92	+.07	0,15	1,26
82,85	76,16	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 39	77,28	+.06	0,16	2,13
79,32	72,11	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 41	73,30	+.04	0,17	2,23
74,05	65,19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 44	67,60	+.10	0,18	2,39
71,23	62,87	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 46	64,04	+.07	0,20	2,44
68,00	59,19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 48	60,42	+.11	0,21	2,47
60,61	50,05	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 56	51,29	+.14	0,24	2,40
58,90	48,59	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 58	50,30	+.20	0,25	2,37
54,25	43,57	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 65	45,10	+.18	0,28	2,23
53,89	40,40	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 68	44,04	+.22	0,28	2,18
57,66	42,98	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 73	45,50	+.28	0,27	1,89
97,88	93,36	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 34	94,14	+.07	0,00	1,57
79,12	70,87	Tr IL 0 ⅜% 47	72,08	+.10	1,04	2,44
62,70	49,79	Tr IL 0 ⅜% 62	53,17	+.24	0,71	2,31
87,38	80,77	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 40	81,66	+.03	0,77	2,19
84,28	76,46	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 42	77,44	+.06	0,81	2,29
104,16	100,95	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 27	101,14	-.05	1,24	0,37
103,67	99,28	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 32	99,93	+.05	1,25	1,26
86,56	72,33	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 54	75,67	+.24	1,65	2,45
85,60	73,36	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 55	75,23	+.25	1,66	2,44
99,52	94,19	Tr IL 1 ¼% 35	94,98	+.12	1,18	1,72
97,09	90,76	Tr IL 1 ¼% 37	91,66	+.08	1,23	1,95
102,53	95,86	Tr IL 1 ¼% 38	97,00	+.14	1,80	2,03
99,42	88,49	Tr IL 1 ¼% 49	90,12	+.20	2,08	2,44
248,27	236,46	Tr IL 2% 35	241,68	+.10	0,83	1,70
349,35	338,41	Tr IL 4 ⅛% 30	341,48	-.23	1,21	0,89

Longs (Over 15 Years)

26,99	22,31	Tr 0 ½% 61	23,34	+.10	2,14	5,37
65,04	55,40	Tr 0 ½% 51	56,90	+.17	0,22	2,47
38,39	32,78	Tr 0 ¾% 50	34,36	+.18	1,82	5,62
47,60	40,99	Tr 1 ¼% 53	42,67	+.18	3,52	5,68
45,88	39,62	Tr 1 ¼% 51	41,32	+.16	3,03	5,67
33,04	27,53	Tr 1 ½% 73	28,60	+.10	3,93	5,20
48,44	41,38	Tr 1 ¾% 57	43,46	+.14	4,03	5,63
48,36	41,73	Tr 1 ¾% 54	42,52	+.17	3,73	5,65
41,45	35,65	Tr 1 ¾% 71	36,96	+.11	4,40	5,33
57,14	49,76	Tr 2 ¼% 65	51,61	+.20	4,84	5,54
74,02	64,55	Tr 3 ½% 68	67,01	+.23	5,22	5,53
81,50	72,00	Tr 3 ¾% 52	74,56	+.21	5,03	5,63
80,90	71,30	Tr 3 ¾% 53	73,73	+.25	5,09	5,65
86,15	77,58	Tr 4 ¼% 55	80,30	+.25	5,29	5,63
83,52	73,44	Tr 4% 60	75,89	+.23	5,27	5,60

Mediums (5-15 Years)

83,19	79,47	Tr 0 ⅛% 31	81,84	+.13	0,31	4,34
86,27	82,79	Tr 0 ⅛% 30	85,04	+.10	0,44	4,30
72,25	67,14	Tr 0 ⅛% 35	69,55	+.19	0,90	4,85
79,97	75,46	Tr 0 ⅛% 33	77,68	+.15	1,13	4,66
48,97	42,75	Tr 0 ⅞% 46	44,65	+.15	1,96	5,56
54,44	47,82	Tr 1 ⅛% 47	49,73	+.12	3,02	5,61
61,88	55,55	Tr 1 ¼% 41	57,97	+.18	2,16	5,31
66,75	60,85	Tr 1 ¼% 39	63,28	+.18	1,78	5,15
75,83	69,99	Tr 1 ¾% 37	72,28	+.20	2,42	5,04
55,77	49,19	Tr 1 ¾% 49	50,99	+.14	3,43	5,62
85,07	81,01	Tr 1¾ 32	83,16	+.13	1,20	4,50
82,54	74,42	Tr 2 ¼% 45	76,86	+.22	4,55	5,61
95,49	90,74	Tr 3 ¼% 33	92,55	+.15	3,51	4,59
80,41	72,57	Tr 3 ¼% 44	75,03	+.21	4,33	5,49
100,00	85,76	Tr 3 ¾% 38	88,31	+.22	4,25	5,11
102,40	96,34	Tr 4 ¼% 34	98,43	+.19	4,57	4,74
101,93	0,01	Tr 4 ¼% 35	97,80	+.20	4,60	4,82
96,45	0,01	Tr 4 ¼% 42	90,33	+.23	4,98	5,40
102,33	0,01	Tr 4 ¼% 32	98,81	+.14	4,30	4,48
100,56	94,70	Tr 4 ¼% 34	96,74	+.19	4,39	4,75
99,39	92,65	Tr 4 ¼% 36	94,99	+.19	4,47	4,91
100,00	88,42	Tr 4 ¼% 39	91,28	+.23	4,67	5,20
100,00	86,92	Tr 4 ¼% 40	89,79	+.24	4,73	5,27
90,97	81,54	Tr 4 ¼% 46	84,34	+.24	5,04	5,54
89,58	79,95	Tr 4 ¼% 49	82,67	+.24	5,14	5,59
101,49	97,47	Tr 4 ¼% 31	98,80	+.12	4,18	4,42
100,70	95,57	Tr 4 ¼% 33	97,31	+.15	4,24	4,60
104,72	100,54	Tr 4 ¼% 30	101,70	+.11	4,67	4,31
105,33	96,78	Tr 4 ¼% 35	99,03	+.21	4,80	4,88
102,00	93,84	Tr 4 ¼% 38	96,50	+.25	4,92	5,14
102,58	98,98	Tr 4

Headcount cuts enable S4 Capital to narrow losses

Emma Powell
Media and Telecoms Editor

Sir Martin Sorrell's advertising company has narrowed losses and slowed a decline in revenue, in a rare boost for the embattled group.

S4 Capital reported a 4.7 per cent fall in net revenue on a like-for-like basis during the first six months of the year, half the 10 per cent drop reported for the same period last year.

Pre-tax losses reduced to £100,000 from £25.1 million a year earlier, as the company further cut its workforce. Staff numbers shrunk by just over 720, or 11 per cent of its overall workforce.

The shares, which have fallen 95 per cent from their 2021 peak, were up 12¾p, or 32.4 per cent, to close at 52p.

Net revenue is expected to decline in the "mid-single digits", compared with previous guidance of being "slightly down" on last year, which implied a margin improvement of about 140 basis points year over year; previous guidance was just over 100 basis points.

Adjusted earnings before interest, taxes and other items are expected to come in at £85 million, in line with analyst consensus, for the full year. Over the first half of the year it reported adjusted earnings of £38 million, more than double the previous year's figure.

Net debt is also set to be lower than previously expected at £50 million to £80 million, from £60 million to £90 million, or 0.7 times adjusted earnings. The group pressed ahead with its first interim dividend of 1.35p a share.

Sorrell said that he expected clients to remain cautious in the near term, reflecting "heightened macroeconomic uncertainty as a result of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East ... This challenging environment results in more measured decision-making."

The company has been hit by a downturn in spending by technology clients, which account for more than half the company's revenue, as they prioritise multibillion-dollar investments in expanding their AI capacity. Shaky macroeconomic conditions have also contributed to major brands pulling back on advertising spending.

The broader industry has been hit by weaker confidence among advertisers, as well as questions about the impact of artificial intelligence, which threatens to complete some tasks more cheaply and quickly.

S4 Capital's results came a day before WPP's interim results, which are expected to show a 6 per cent decline in underlying second-quarter revenue.

S4 Capital was founded by Sorrell in 2018 after his departure from WPP, the FTSE 100 ad group he formed in 1985, amid allegations of misconduct. Sorrell has denied any wrongdoing and was allowed to depart as a "good leaver".

He founded S4 with the ambition of creating a digital advertising challenger to the leading incumbents, including WPP.

However, it has been plagued by a series of profit warnings, which have contributed towards its market value shrinking to approximately £325 million from a peak of more than £5 billion in 2021.

S4 employs almost 6,200 people, or "monks". In a recent interview with Fortune, Sorrell said that it was "dead true" that running a business with a lot of Gen Z employees was difficult.

"I think it's to do with a different attitude developed through Covid, developed through distributed working. It is much more difficult to manage that than it is a workforce of 200,000 who come into offices on a regular basis," he told the title."

MICHAEL REAVES/GETTY IMAGES

Marathon runner Ruth Chepngetich uses the new Nike long-distance "super shoes"

Croydon firm sends Nike shoe work abroad

The owner of a Croydon factory best known for developing the technology used in Nike's long-distance "super shoes" has placed more than 100 jobs at risk as it shifts its focus towards Vietnam and Poland (Guy Taylor writes).

Zotefoams is a key supplier of the lightweight foam used in Nike's record-breaking running shoes, which were worn by Eliud Kipchoge when he became the first person to run a sub two-hour marathon in 2019.

Founded as a rubber manufacturer in 1921, the company specialises in high-performance foams across a host of industries from aviation and automotive to construction, insulation and athletic footwear. It employs about 680 people globally and counts Nike as its biggest customer.

Zotefoams announced proposals yesterday for a restructuring at its historic Croydon site, which it expects to produce annual cost savings of about £4 million.

In a statement, Zotefoams said the decision reflected efforts to transfer "high-volume" footwear production to Vietnam through 2026 and 2027, alongside "increased utilisation of manufacturing capacity in Poland" and investment in automation.

The proposals remain subject to consultation and decisions on individual roles will be made only once discussions have concluded.

"As operations in Vietnam come online, we must make sure our UK operations are the right size and shape for the future.

"Today's proposals reflect the next step in aligning our manufacturing footprint with the long-term needs of our customers and our strategy for future growth," Ronan Cox, the group chief executive, said.

Shares in Zotefoams were trading down 0.7 per cent after the announcement, which came alongside strong half-year results. Revenue rose by nearly a quarter over the period to £95.2 million, driving adjusted pre-tax profits up 34 per cent to £15.3 million.

Zotefoams maintained full-year guidance of £190.8 million in revenue and £26.3 million in pre-tax profits.

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***Robert Stephens* Tempus**
Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips

Buy on the dip and you could clean up

RECKITT BENCKISER

Market cap £33.5 billion | **First-half revenue** £6.4bn

Many may feel that Reckitt Benckiser's 15 per cent share price slide since the start of the year is set to continue. After all, the FTSE 100 consumer goods company faces an uncertain near-term operating outlook amid elevated geopolitical and economic risks that could weigh on demand for its products. However, with a relatively appealing market valuation, sound fundamentals and upbeat medium-to-long-term profit growth prospects, its performance could prove pessimistic investors wrong.

Although Reckitt Benckiser was formed in 1999 via the merger of Reckitt & Colman and Benckiser, its history goes all the way back to 1840, when 25 employees manufactured starch at a factory in Hull. Today, 36,000 staff in 80 countries produce well-known brands such as Dettol, Gaviscon and Finish.

Emerging markets are its most important geographical sector, accounting for 44 per cent of core revenue. Europe and North America are its other key markets, contributing 33 per cent and 23 per cent, respectively, of core revenue.

Their performance in the first half of the current financial year was very mixed. While emerging markets produced like-for-like (LFL) sales growth of 8.5 per cent, recently released interim results showed that North America posted a relatively lacklustre 0.8 per cent, while minus 3 per cent LFL sales growth in Europe was highly disappointing.

In the short run, it would be unsurprising if developed markets continue to act as a drag on the firm's overall financial performance. After all, inflation in the US and Europe remains persistently above central bank targets.

Alongside a recently tightened monetary policy in Europe, as well as the potential for interest rate rises in the US over the coming months, sticky inflation is likely to squeeze real-terms wage growth. This could lead to reduced demand in the short run as customers potentially trade down to cheaper substitutes or even reduce their consumption.

This, though, is likely to only be a temporary problem. Inflation in the US and the eurozone is expected to fall to 2 per cent within the next 30 months, according to central bank forecasts. This should ease pressure on disposable incomes, while providing scope for a looser monetary policy that, once time lags have passed, acts as a catalyst on after-inflation wage growth and the company's financial performance.

Boosted by a £500 million buyback programme, the firm is set to post an 8 per cent rise in earnings per share (EPS) next year. This is modestly higher than the FTSE 100's typical mid-single-digit EPS growth rate and suggests that, trading on a forward earnings multiple using current year forecasts of 15.8, it offers good value for money at a time when the UK's large-cap index has a price-to-earnings (P/E) ratio of 18.

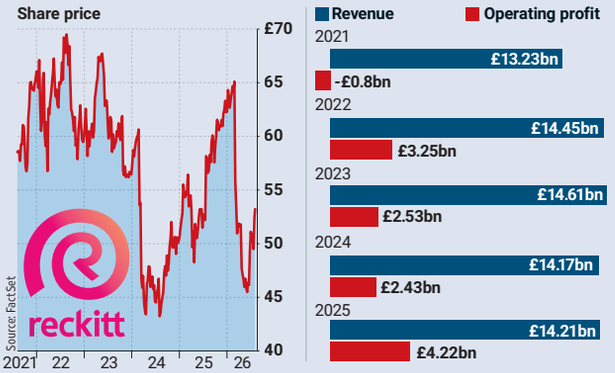
Alongside upward rerating potential and brisk prospective EPS growth, Reckitt Benckiser's total return is set to be boosted by a dividend yield of 4 per cent that is 110 basis points higher than that of the FTSE 100. And with continued restructuring via divestment to focus on a narrower range of faster-growing core brands with higher profit margins, while further reducing fixed costs as a proportion of revenue in a major efficiency drive, its long-term total return prospects are likely to improve.

In the meantime, a solid financial position means it can overcome near-term threats. The half-year results showed that net finance costs were covered more than seven times by operating profits. The firm's strong competitive position, which is largely focused on brand loyalty, means it is also particularly well placed to cope with continued above-target inflation. It affords significant pricing power vis-à-vis sector peers that should help to support profit margins if, for example, war in the Middle East leads to higher-than-expected energy prices and rising input costs.

When combined with the threat of a global trade war, this could lead to further share price volatility in the short run. But with the shares already offering good value for money following their recent decline. alongside a strong financial position and attractive income prospects, Reckitt's risk/reward ratio remains highly favourable.

ADVICE Buy
WHY Market valuation fails to fully factor the company's long-term growth potential

From Hull



FTSE 250 hits record high on AI slump fears

MARKET REPORT

The FTSE 250 has hit a record high, topping 24,000 points as part of a broader rally in UK assets (Mehreen Khan writes).

The mid-cap index, which is a better reflection of the UK economy than the FTSE 100, gained 173.33 points, or 0.7 per cent, yesterday to hit 24,632.63. It has climbed more than 11 per cent this year, adding more than 2,000 points. The benchmark FTSE 100, which set a record high last month, has gained nearly 10 per cent this year.

Analysts said UK stocks were the beneficiaries of fears over the valuation and mass investment carried out by US AI companies, with capital finding its way into less exposed stock markets in Europe. Global equities rallied in the midweek session, reversing recent drops in tech-related firms.

Investors have flocked to "more defensive sectors ... including consumer staples and financials. This broadening of market leadership helped propel the UK's FTSE 100 to a fresh record high," Tony Whincup, head of investment specialists at TrinityBridge, said.

The FTSE 250's best-performing stocks this year have been CMC Markets, a spread betting group, Raspberry Pi, a Cambridge computer firm, and Keller Group, an engineering group that prepares ground for building on.

The shares of the first two have gained more than 120 per cent and Keller is up 90 per cent. The total value of the index is more than £313 billion and it represents 17 per cent of the value of the UK's publicly listed companies.

On the FTSE 100 it was a tough day for banks and financial services stocks with exposure to China, following a report that the Chinese authorities are taking steps to claw back decades of unpaid taxes worth billions of pounds.

Shares in **Prudential**, which has significant exposure to China, fell as much as 8 per cent in the day before closing down 70p, or 6.4 per cent, at £10.25. **HSBC**, which makes most of its money in Hong Kong, was down 74p, or 4.7 per cent, at £15.51. Britain's other major bank with significant operations in China, **Standard Chartered**, closed down 36p, or 1.6 per cent, at £22.12.

At the top end of the FTSE 100 was **Next** after another set of strong results and an upgrade to its profit forecasts for the year. Its shares were up 850p, or 5.7 per cent, at £156.60.

Wall Street report

Strong corporate profits and expectations for more growth ahead have been steadily pushing stocks higher but with uncertainty about the direction of the US war with Iran continuing to hang over the market, indices had a mixed session but still a record. The S&P 500 dipped 12.97 points, or 0.2 per cent, to 7,723.55, while the Nasdaq shed 221.55 points, or 0.8 per cent, to 26,363.44. The Dow Jones industrial average, however, rose 263.24 points, or 0.5 per cent, to 54,349.12, a new high and its 24th record close of 2026.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
Next	5.7%
Endeavour Mining	5.7%
Fresnillo	4.5%
Glencore	4.1%
Coca-Cola HBC AG	3.9%
Vodafone	-2.1%
ConvaTec	-2.4%
Autotrader	-2.8%
HSBC	-4.7%
Prudential	-6.4%

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HSBC and Standard Chartered both suffered yesterday on exposure to China

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tritax to raise up to £350m

Tritax Big Box Reit, the real estate investment trust that specialises in developing logistics and data centres, is looking to raise up to £350 million through a placing of ordinary shares to City fund managers as well as a conditional retail offer.

The final issue price of the shares will be determined at the close of the book building process and retail investors can participate through RetailBook's partner network, with a minimum subscription of £250.

The net proceeds of the money raiser will be used to fund data centre development and enhance financial flexibility for future logistics acquisitions. The company said this would include the capital expenditure requirements of two additional data centre schemes in Greater London deliverable over 2030-31.

Colin Godfrey, the chief executive of Tritax Big Box, said: "These new schemes have the potential to add £50 million to £60 million of incremental rental at an attractive 9 to 11 per cent yield on cost and £300 to £400 million of capital profits in aggregate, reflecting a development profit on cost of over 50 per cent."

Tritax Big Box reported its half-year results yesterday with a 16.2 per cent rise in net rental income to £173.3 million in the six months to June 30 compared with £149.2 million a year ago. The shares closed down ¼p, or 0.1 per cent, at 171¾p.

Eli Lilly's upbeat forecast

Eli Lilly raised its full-year revenue forecast yesterday, banking on sustained demand for its blockbuster GLP-1 weight-loss and diabetes drugs. Despite pricing pressure and competition from Novo Nordisk, which launched an oral version of its weight-loss drug, Wegovy, in the US this year, the strong results are likely to reassure investors. Eli Lilly passed a $1 trillion valuation last year; analysts expect it to make over $100 billion by 2030 in America alone. Its diabetes treatment, Mounjaro, and obesity drug, Zepbound, accounted for a combined 64.7 per cent share of revenues in the most recent quarter.

Activist raises Unite stake

An activist investor that has taken aim at a number of London-listed companies has built an interest of more than 5 per cent in Britain's largest student housing provider. Saba Capital, an American hedge fund run by Boaz Weinstein, has built an interest in Unite through financial derivatives. It held 0.084 per cent of the voting rights in Unite Group through shares and 5.04 per cent through financial instruments, taking its total interest in Unite Group to nearly 26.4 million voting rights as of July 31, a regulatory filing showed. Unite declined to comment. Saba was approached for comment.

Digital slows at NY Times

The New York Times added digital subscribers more slowly in the second quarter despite a busy news cycle that included the US-Israeli war with Iran and the Fifa World Cup. The newspaper added about 280,000 digital-only subscribers in the three-month period, lower than an estimate of 295,300 from Visible Alpha and the 310,000 it added in the previous quarter. Its total subscriber count is now 13.35 million. The company said it expected digital-only subscription revenue growth to slow to between 12 and 15 per cent in the third quarter, the mid-point of which was below the estimate of 14.2 per cent.

Business

EQUITY PRICES

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's annual 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.

12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities and investment trusts are based on intra-day figures.

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
Automobiles & Part						
86¾	33½	Aston Martin Lag	34¼	– ¼	...	-0.7
Banking & Finance						
265	177½	**Aberdeen Group**	254⅝	+ 2⅝	5.7	11.8
1¼	0⅝	Acuity RM♦	0⅝		...	-3.4
3825⅞	2624	**Admiral**	3706	– 36	5.5	15.0
662½	414½	AJ Bell	606	+ 14	2.4	23.6
28761½	22372½	AON Corp‡	26630½	+ 261⅛	0.9	...
1130	799	Arbuthnot♦	830	– 5	6.6	7.6
276½	145½	Ashmore Group	217	+ 3⅜	7.8	17.8
21261½	14851⅛	Australia & NZ	19901¼	– 7¼	5.7	19.5
704½	590⅛	**Aviva**	7011¼	+ 7¼	5.6	26.1
1098	641	Banco Santander	1096	+ 18	1.5	14.1
554¼	352⅛	**Barclays**	527½	+ 5¼	2.2	12.0
171½	4	Blue Star Capital♦	4¼	– ¼	...	-2.2
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs♦	676		5.4	5.1
363⅜	212	Bridgepoint Grp	341⅜	– 2⅜	2.8	68.3
352	264⅜	Chesnara	342	+ 2½	6.6	-67.7
492	349	City of London Grp	492	+ 1	6.7	16.5
563½	318⅛	Close Bros	436	– 2⅛	...	-6.5
753	203	CMC Markets‡	697	+ 16	2.0	25.3
2957⅜	2057	Deutsche Bank	28141⅜	+ 22¼	3.0	10.4
93	74½	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	74¼	– ⅛	0.9	...
240¼	136	EPE Special Opps♦	211		...	8.7
85	52	Fiske♦	67½		1.7	5.9
92	80	Foresight Ventures VCT	83		4.3	15.5
4700	2190	Georgia Capital	4330	– 170	...	2.7
57	43½	Hansard Global	51		8.7	39.2
230	194	Helios U/W♦	223		4.5	7.7
1904	1257½	**Hiscox**	1791	+ 14	2.2	13.4
1610	922¼	**HSBC**	15105⅛	– 74	3.7	16.8
1956	1016	**IG Group**	1350	– 10	3.2	9.3
204	90⅞	Impax Asset Mgmt♦	115	+ 2¼	8.7	7.2
2340	1424⅛	**ICG**	2048	+ 36	4.2	12.3
1451¼	1151⅝	Intl Public P'ship	1443⅝	+ ¼	6.1	-13.9
690	499⅛	**Investec**	675½	+ 3½	5.7	8.8
76	60	Investment Co	75		...	...
72	48	IP Group	68⅝	+ 1⅜	1.9	9.5
27	6½	Jarvis Securities♦	8		43.8	2.5
214½	113⅛	Jupiter Fund Mgmt	164¼	+ 3	3.7	8.6
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs	593½	+ 1	2.8	6.6
310	217¼	**Legal & General**	305¼	+ 2⅜	7.2	30.6
12130	6905	**Lion Finance Group**‡	12020	+ 20	3.1	8.4
385	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt‡	306	+ 4½	6.2	19.9
61	35	Livermore Invs Grp♦	36¼		8.5	16.5
117⅛	77⅜	**Lloyds Banking**	117⅜		3.4	16.7
22	14	LMS Capital	15½		25.7	...
10165	6684	**London Stock Exchange**	8628	+ 128	1.8	36.2
365½	247	**M&G**	364⅜	+ 2	5.6	28.9
327¼	154½	Man Group	316	+ 5¼	4.0	27.7
39½	20	Manx Financial Grp♦‡	24		2.1	4.4
10	1¼	Marechale Capital♦	5¼	+ ¼	...	-16.4
185⅝	98¼	Metro Bank	177¾	+ 6⅝	...	22.8
2621½	1864⅝	National Australia	2226½	– 16	4.0	19.2
726	500¼	**NatWest Group**	713¾	– 2¼	4.9	13.3
842½	438½	PayPoint	607	– 14½	6.6	10.3
1238	910¼	**Prudential**	1025	– 70	1.9	9.0
1¼	0⅛	Quantum Blockchain♦	0⅝		...	-1.9
209	150¼	Quilter	202½	+ 5¼	3.1	22.8
2500	1580	Rathbones Group	1692	+ 18	5.9	15.7
325	245	Rockwood Strategic	322	+ ½	...	0.0
2458½	1620	S & U	1960	+ 20	5.9	10.0
3	0⅛	Sancus Lending♦	1⅛		...	7.2
59¼	42¼	Schroder REIT	44⅞	+ 1⅜	8.0	...
599½	358⅛	**Schroders**	589½	+ ½	3.7	17.3
1575½	1038⅜	**St James's Place**	1135½	+ 31½	1.6	11.4
2278	1285	**Standard Chart'd**	2212	– 36	2.3	15.3
937	615	**Standard Life**	929	+ 7½	6.0	-197.2
6347½	4186	Sun Life Canada	6060⅛	– 62⅛	3.4	...
6½	2¼	Tavistock Invs♦	3½		3.2	2.6
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp	4858	– 114	5.3	6.8
1¾	0¼	Tern♦	1¼	– ⅛	...	-1.5
60	40½	Time Finance♦	51	– 1	...	8.0
0⅜	0⅛	Tooru♦	0⅛		...	-1.6
4	1½	Trueticle♦	3⅛	+ ⅛	...	-5.6
132	77⅛	Vanquis Banking Gp	81½	+ ¼	...	25.4
2800	2000	Volvere♦	2110	+ 10	...	11.2
7239⅝	5453⅛	Wells Fargo	6623¼	+ 49¾	2.2	...
2275½	1620	Westpac Bkg Corp	2017½	– 14½	4.0	19.2
31½	23	Worsley Investors	28⅝		...	...
57550	49947½	Zurich Insurance	55834½	– 160½	4.9	19.0
Construction & Property						
380	181	Alumasc♦	222½		5.0	8.6
6¾	4½	Aseana Properties	4⅞		...	1.2
2½	1¼	Built Cybernetics♦	1½		...	-150.0
900	541	Balfour Beatty	879½	+ 9½	1.6	16.7
410½	235½	**Barratt Redrow**	315¼	+ ½	5.4	23.2
2890	1715	Bellway	2084	– 4	3.5	15.7
4442	2796	Berkeley	3584	– 46	...	10.8
1208	800½	Big Yellow Grp	909½	– ½	5.2	...
460	233	Billington Hldgs♦	410		2.7	39.4
237	133½	Boot (Henry)	154		5.1	8.8
383½	271½	Breedon	344	– 3¾	4.4	14.2
451½	318¾	**British Land**	448	– ¼	5.2	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2196	1469½	Derwent London	2112	– 34	3.9	...
5½	4½	DCI Advisors♦	4¾		...	-2.7
19½	11	First Property♦	12½		2.0	6.9
75	29	Fletcher King♦	33½	– 4	6.7	22.6
62	31½	Foxtons Group	37	– 1¾	3.2	8.6
632	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	613	+ 8	3.3	18.2
401¾	241	Genuit Group	296½	+ 3¾	4.3	16.3
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	276	– 3	4.0	10.2
1031½	788½	Grafton Grp Units	1029¼	+ 13¾	3.7	14.6
213	149½	Grainger	174¼	– ½	4.8	6.4
377	270	Great Portland Est	359	+ ⅝	2.3	0.0
391½	263½	Hammerson	378½	– 2	4.8	...
191	116½	Harworth Group	143½	+ 8⅝	1.2	49.5
400	225	Heath (Samuel)♦	255		5.1	31.9
241½	180½	Helical	200	– 2	1.3	41.4
159¾	87⅝	Ibstock	93¼	– 4⅝	2.1	...
161½	112	James Halstead♦	125	+ 1	7.1	12.9
3518	1238	Keller	3080	+ 30	2.6	15.2
7178¾	7071½	Kingspan Group	7095¼		0.7	22.4
726	522½	**Land Securities**	722	+ 1½	5.7	...
216¼	175¾	**LondonMetric Prop**	197¾	– ⅜	6.3	...
25½	4¾	Macau Prop Opp Fd	6¼		...	-0.3
209½	124	Marshalls	174¼	– 1¾	3.8	30.6
110	66	Michelmersh Brick♦	78½	– ½	5.9	19.5
1	0⅜	Mindflair♦	0⅜		...	-1.3
5730	3915	Morgan Sindall	4464	+ 64	3.7	12.0
10200	8350	Mountview Estates‡	8800	+ 100	6.0	16.9
84⅛	65¼	NewRiver REIT‡	82¼	– ¾	8.2	...
234	160	Palace Capital	179	+ 3½	8.4	39.8
320	261	Panther Securities♦	296		4.1	12.1
1552	947⅜	**Persimmon**	1123	– 20½	5.3	12.6
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109⅝	87⅛	Primary Health Props‡	95⅝		7.6	...
33¾	28	Real Estate Inv♦	30¼		4.9	-61.4
849½	578¾	Safestore‡	637½	+ 9	4.8	...
1126	791½	Savills	976	+ 32	3.5	18.8
5½	0¾	Secure Prop Dev & Inv♦	0½		...	-0.1
997⅜	603	**Segro**	971¾	– 3	3.2	...
162¾	124½	Shaftesbury Capital	146	– ¾	2.9	7.8
14¼	6¾	SIG	8¾	+ ¼	...	-1.6
153	105	SigmaRoc♦	129¾	+ 1¾	...	17.8
113	86¼	Sirius Real Estate	101¾	– ¾	5.4	7.8
140	106	Smart (J)	112½		2.9	8.6
23¼	15⅜	Steppe Cement♦	22		...	19.6
116⅞	74⅝	Taylor Wimpey	82¾	+ 1½	5.0	29.6
140	104	Town Centre	133	+ 3	3.8	...
723½	493¾	Travis Perkins	666½	– 12	1.7	-8.0
175	132¼	**Tritax Big Box**	171¾	– ¼	4.8	...
760½	442¼	Unite Group	541	+ 3½	7.0	...
746⅝	220	Vistry Group	272⅝	– 11⅜	...	6.5
434¼	312	Workspace Group	364	+ 3	7.2	...
920	730	Wynnstay Props♦	880	+ 15	3.2	12.3
Consumer Goods						
229	88⅛	AEP Plantations	177		3.4	10.3
30	17⅜	Alrea♦	26½	– 1	3.8	10.4
2359	1729½	**AB Foods**	2105	+ 9	3.0	14.9
715⅞	589	Barr (AG)	615	+ 5	3.0	14.5
5326	3677	**British Amer Tob**‡	4378	– 14	5.6	12.5
1376½	976	**Burberry Group**	1209	– 1½	...	...
181¼	85¼	C&C Group	97¾	– 1¾	5.0	...
5⅞	2¾	Capital Metals♦	4	– ¼	...	-33.7
460	271	Churchill China♦	390	+ 5	5.4	9.8
5195	3270	**Coca-Cola HBC**	5015	+ 189	2.1	22.6
1515¾	821	Colefax♦	1465	– 15	0.4	10.4
5810	4775	Cranswick‡	5290	+ 20	2.1	17.9
2142	1295½	**Diageo**	1641	+ 5½	3.8	20.9
0¼	0	Distil♦	0		...	-0.5
1918	1160	Evans (M.P.)♦	1660	– 2	3.6	10.3
151½	114½	Fevara	132	+ 1	1.8	5.7
23540	14070	**Games Workshop**‡	19010	– 20	3.0	30.5
2185⅞	1028⅜	Glanbia	1980	– 93½	1.9	36.5
307½	191¾	Greencore	260¾	– 1¾	1.0	19.7
83¼	4⅜	Headlam	9¾	+ ¼	...	-0.1
861	447⅞	Hilton Food	608½	+ 2½	5.8	6.9
3632	2626	**Imperial Brands**	2747	+ 11	6.1	10.9
7646½	5567⅞	Kerry Group	7165½	+ 18½	1.7	20.9
170	106½	McBride	165¼	+ 4¾	1.8	8.5
165	85	Mulberry Group♦	162½	+ 5	...	-12.5
1290	880	Nichols♦	1065	+ 20	3.7	18.2
374	252	Norcros	330	+ 5	3.4	...
379	309	Origin Ents♦	366		4.1	8.6
1	0¾	PACSCo♦	0⅜		...	-0.0
138	47⅜	Portmeirion♦	50		...	-1.1
1½	0½	Provexis♦	1¼		...	-56.2
114	65⅜	PZ Cussons	108¾	+ 2¼	3.3	-78.6
138	87	REA	109	– ½	...	-209.9
213⅞	155	Tandem♦	195	– 5	1.5	12.6
330	220	The Character Grp♦	315		2.2	-46.7
10	5	Ukrproduct Grp♦	6¼		...	-14.5
5542½	3644	**Unilever**	4774	+ 25½	3.4	12.9
111	19½	Victoria♦	63		...	-0.2
Engineering						
59⅛	10	Assoc Brit Eng	20		...	-6.9
2230	1458	Avon Technologies	1888	+ 108	1.0	72.9
1527	902⅛	**Babcock**	1185½	+ 5	0.6	28.2
2360	1529	**BAE Systems**	2156	– 28	1.8	31.3
1500	500	Braime A N/V♦	1200	– 50	1.4	6.4
2285	1376	Braime Group♦	2250		0.7	11.9
550	350	Caffyns‡	400		2.5	-9.8
0½	0⅛	Cap XX Ltd♦	0⅛		...	-3.6
340	202¼	Castings‡	300	+ 7	6.1	17.3
27	12⅜	Checkit♦	19		...	-7.3
644	446½	Chemring Group	630	+ 16½	1.3	35.4
55	28⅜	Chesterfield Spec Cyl♦	34½		...	-38.3
1538	881⅜	Cohort♦	1254	– 4	1.4	24.0
520	171	Dialight	516	+ 19	...	...
15	5¼	Feedback♦	6		...	-0.2
1270	463⅛	Gooch & Housego♦	1225	+ 5	1.1	89.4
28500	8900	Goodwin	18780	+ 240	1.5	57.4
4902	3194	**Halma**‡	3800	+ 58	0.7	38.6
3145	1953⅛	Hill & Smith	3010	+ 85	1.8	29.3
2¾	1	Image Scan♦	2¾		...	-12.9
3096	2150	**IMI**	3084	+ 62	1.1	24.8
7000	3480	Judges Scl.♦	4300	– 210	2.7	52.0
90	34	LPA♦	82½		...	-31.2
685	409⅞	**Melrose**	490⅞	+ 10¼	1.5	16.9
251½	167	Morgan Advanced	240	+ 4	5.1	32.0
405	200	Mpac♦	315	– 7½	...	-9.9
1800	1100	MS Int'l♦	1470		1.8	21.8
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments‡	2872	+ 52	0.8	33.9
2413½	1779¼	Phillips Elec	1977½	+ 11	3.7	-46.1
4⅛	1	PipeHawk♦	2⅛		...	-3.0
5490	2880	Renishaw	5180	– 35	1.5	45.0
2112⅞	2064	SKF Group	2068½		2.9	30.6
2754½	2088	**Smiths**	2699	+ 11	1.7	31.5
215	135	Solid State♦	185	– 7	1.5	25.7
245	170	Somero Enter♦	230		3.3	16.3
8050	5950	**Spirax Group**	7345	+ 55	2.3	33.1
7½	3½	Tanfield♦	3¾	– ⅜	...	-3.7
334	240	Thorpe FW♦	253	– 1	2.8	11.7
142¾	47	Transense Tech♦	48½		...	5.2
507½	350	Vesuvius	383¾	+ 5¼	6.1	18.2
710	325	Volex	555	+ 18	0.9	21.3
3580	2254	**Weir**	2688	+ 2	1.6	28.1
2060	833	XP Power	1786	+ 86	...	-42.5
Health						
284½	187	Advanced Medical♦	281	+ ½	1.0	60.8
12½	5	Allergy Therapeutics♦	5	– ¼	...	-6.0
8	0⅛	CellBxHealth♦	1⅜		...	-0.2
580	374	Anpario♦	530		2.4	13.2
15732	9892	**AstraZeneca**	12036	+ 296	2.0	24.6
3¼	1⅝	Cambridge Nutri Sci♦	1¾		...	2.6
259¼	193	**Convatec**	223¾	– 5⅞	2.5	35.1
38	20	Potter & Moore♦	22½		2.4	7.4
116⅜	72	Eco Animal Health♦	100		...	30.7
32	21⅛	EKF Diagnostics♦	25¾	+ ⅛	...	54.8
12½	0¼	Futura Medical♦	0⅝		...	-0.1
3228¼	1943	Genus	2260	+ 56	1.5	77.1
2282	1288⅛	**GSK**	1915½	+ 1	3.7	13.6
0¼	0⅛	Gunsynd♦	0⅛		...	-2.0
416⅛	274⅝	**Haleon**	365¾	+ 8	2.0	19.7
1946⅛	1187	Hikma Pharma	1571	– 10	4.0	11.6
274	150½	Hutchmed China♦	178	+ 5	...	4.5
19⅜	13⅜	ImmuPharma♦	4½	+ ½	...	-12.0
32	12¼	Inspiration Health♦	18	– ½	...	-15.5
15	6½	IXICO♦	8		...	-4.3
1	0⅛	Thalia Therapeutics♦	0⅝		...	-4.0
77⅝	53⅞	NIOX Group♦	62¾	+ 1¼	2.5	36.9
131.50	91.56	Novartis	CHF 124.46	– 0.14	3.0	40.8
962	423½	Oxford Biomedica	574	+ 8	...	-21.3
0¾	0¼	Physiomics♦	0½		...	-2.7
4⅜	1¼	Proteome Sciences♦	1¾		...	-1.7
6522⅜	3664	**Reckitt Benck**	5342	+ 70	4.1	11.4
27	10⅜	RUA Life Sci♦	24		...	-103.0
29	9½	Sareum Holdings♦	23		...	-9.6
1441½	1050	**Smith & Neph**	1108½	– 13½	2.7	20.7
256½	140¼	Spire Healthcare	232½	+ 2½	0.6	56.7
14	5	Talisman Metals♦	6	– ¼	...	1.7
0⅜	0⅛	ValiRx♦	0⅛		...	-0.3
Industrials						
79⅜	58⅛	Accsys Tech♦	71¼		...	31.1
4780½	3665⅛	BASF	4340½	+ 18¾	4.4	27.8
4606¾	2164⅜	Bayer	4236½	+ 64½	0.2	-13.4
98½	71	Coats Group	83¼	+ 1½	3.0	19.0
3352	2426½	**Croda**	3289	– 33	3.4	74.1
457	230	Cropper (James)♦	450	+ 40	...	14.6
184	136	Elementis	181¼	+ 2¾	1.8	-31.3
110	6½	Hardide♦	106	– 1	...	...
3775	2095	International Paper	3145	+ 30	4.4	-8.2
2434	1731⅞	Johnson Matthey	2154	+ 54	3.6	-37.7
1085	660	Mondi	905¼	– 15¾	1.4	28.2
169⅜	110	Robinson♦	125		4.8	9.2
949½	597	Swire Pacific	911¾	– 16⅞	3.9	44.4
12½	5½	Symphony Enviro♦	8¼		...	-7.6
124	16¾	Synthomer	109	+ 10	...	-1.1
2858¼	2026½	Takeda Pharma	2482¼	– 12⅜	3.9	-54.5
823	515	Victrex	816	+ 5	7.3	25.5
430	320	Wynnstay♦	372½	+ 5	4.8	37.7
479⅜	302	Zotefoams	452	– 6	1.8	9.7
Leisure						
451	231	Accesso Tech♦	297	– 10	...	14.3
260	160	Celtic♦	213	– 7	...	6.0
223⅜	164	Domino's Pizza	212	– 8	5.4	14.0
1022	500⅛	**Entain**	537	– 11⅝	3.6	-5.1
73	19¼	Evoke	44¼		...	-0.4
55	29	Gaming Realms♦	31⅜		...	15.5
310	210	Heavitree♦	300		2.2	5.5
244	130	Heavitree A♦	225		2.9	4.2
175.70	115.03	**InterCont'l Hotels**	$160.25	+ 3.45	1.1	32.6
301½	223½	Mitch & Butlers	282½	– ½	...	9.5
297	129⅜	On The Beach	190¾	+ 2	2.1	34.7
164⅜	86	Rank Group	100	– ⅝	3.0	10.5
214½	137½	SSP	211¾	+ 2¼	2.1	-22.8
0⅝	0½	Bow Street Group♦	0⅝		...	-0.3
823	530½	Wetherspoon JD	812	– 2½	1.5	13.5
3302	2098	**Whitbread**	2521		3.8	20.4
Media						
76⅛	51½	Aeorema Comms♦	61½		4.3	48.9
29	18	Altitude Group♦	23½		...	-94.0
115	70½	Arcontech Group♦	79		5.1	11.2
844⅜	418½	**Autotrader**	520	– 15¼	2.2	15.2
690	435	Bloomsbury Pub‡	637	+ 7	2.5	19.2
3½		Caledonian Hldgs♦	1⅝		...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media♦	42½		...	23.1
0⅝	0½	Catenæ♦	0⅛		...	-3.1
22¾	9	Ebiquity♦	9⅜		...	-0.9
785½	262½	Future	316¾	– ⅜	5.4	5.0
154	60½	GlobalData	83¼	+ ⅜	1.8	18.9
110	44	IG Design Group♦	100	– 6	1.0	-0.8
1000	719	**Informa**	911⅜	+ 4	2.5	...
87⅜	65¼	ITV	72	– 1⅜	6.9	12.2
223½	98½	ME Group	123¼	– 1	6.8	8.2
0⅛	0½	Mediazest♦	0⅛		...	13.4
27	12	Mission Group♦	18		...	-0.8
220½	139½	Mony Group‡	206¾	+ 3⅝	6.1	13.5
2341⅜	1624½	News Corp A	2093	– 2¾	0.7	...
2606⅜	1891½	News Corp B	2389¾	+ 9⅞	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group♦‡	314½	+ 10	4.9	-10.5
1337	874½	**Pearson**	1239	+ 11½	2.1	24.1
4½	3	Primorus Inv♦	3⅜		...	5.0
75⅜	40½	Reach‡	42	– ¾	14.0	-1.0
59	40	React♦	42½		...	-29.3
3905	1991	**Relx**	2715	+ 15	2.5	24.1
827	391⅞	Rightmove	475¾	+ 1⅛	2.3	16.9
270	131	SpaceandPeople♦	137½		...	6.4
133	95½	STV Group	106	– 1	...	-9.8
470	170½	System1 Group♦	325		1.8	31.2
4467½	4408⅜	21st Cent Fox A	4408⅜		0.9	...
3360	3308½	21st Cent Fox B	3360		1.2	...
369	230	Wilmington	280	– 5	4.1	21.8
409½	218½	WPP	307¼	+ 2¼	4.9	6.1
71½	40	Zinc Media♦	56½		...	-5.5
Natural Resources						
0⅛	0	ADM Energy‡	0		...	1.2
17⅞	8½	H-Power♦	10⅞		...	-4.5
89⅛	36½	Afentra♦	60¼	– ½	...	-58.0
0	0	Arkadian Strat Metals♦	0		...	-1.1
0¼	0½	Allen Metals♦	0⅛		...	-14.9
2⅞	1	Aminex	1¼		...	-14.0
8924	3349½	Anglo Amer Plat	6260½	+ 135½	7.3	23.4
4239	2068	**Anglo Amer**	4021	+ 114	0.7	-16.4
435	154½	Anglo Asian Mng♦	413	+ 18	0.7	35.9
4475	1922½	**Antofagasta**	4050	+ 119	1.2	40.5
1¼	0⅛	Arc Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-1.2
2½	1¼	Ariana Resources♦	1½	+ ⅛	...	-145.0
0⅝	0½	Arkle Resources♦	0⅝		...	-10.2
2¼	0½	Asiamet Resources♦	1½	+ ⅛	...	-13.1
1094	440½	Atalaya Mine	960	+ 43	1.0	18.4
4¼	2½	Beacon Energy♦	2¾	– ¼	...	-0.7
13	4	Beowulf Mining♦	8¼	+ 1	...	-2.5

PRICES

Major indices

New York		
Dow Jones	54,349.12	(+263.24)
Nasdaq	26,363.44	(-221.55)
S&P 500	7,723.55	(-12.97)
Tokyo		
Nikkei 225	66300.44	(+2342.91)
Hong Kong		
Hang Seng	25915.82	(+62.90)
Amsterdam		
Amsterdam AEX	1111.34	(-1.15)
Sydney		
Australia AO	9405.40	(+93.50)
Frankfurt		
DAX	26126.30	(-76.05)
Singapore		
Singapore Straits	5581.37	(-30.88)
Brussels		
Brussels BEL20	5775.95	(+68.81)
Paris		
Paris CAC	8669.30	(+2.67)
Zurich		
Zurich SMI	14551.56	(+88.33)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6476.98	(-9.72)
London		
FTSE100	10888.30	(+8.92)
FTSE250	24632.63	(+173.33)
FTSE350	5929.61	(+8.87)
FTSE Eurotop 100	5088.76	(-3.93)
FTSE All Share	5864.06	(+8.89)
FTSE Non Financials	6371.02	(nc)
TechMark Focus	9514.36	(+57.46)
US$	1.3478	(+0.0032)
Euro	1.1666	(-0.0002)
SDR	0.9858	(+0.0013)
CPI Jun (2015=100)	142.5	
RPI Jun (1987=100)	416.5	
RPIX Jun (1987=100)	409.7	

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	26-Sep	87.85	88.06	87.67	87.93	222287	1331798
	26-Dec				87.88	698	226
	27-Mar				87.78	0	
3-Mth Sonia Index	26-Jun	96.2525	96.2525	96.25	96.2525	2140	402443
	26-Sep	96.155	96.17	96.145	96.165	83985	425968
	26-Dec	95.975	96	95.96	95.995	111700	541295
	27-Mar	95.86	95.885	95.835	95.88	78710	396405
3 Mth Sonia Index	27-Jun	95.82	95.84	95.79	95.835	79411	390777
	27-Sep	95.82	95.84	95.79	95.83	54753	255471
	27-Dec	95.845	95.865	95.815	95.85	54530	296214
3-Mth Euribor	26-Sep	97.44	97.445	97.42

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0½	0	Bezant Resources♦	0½		...	9.6
3495	1918	BHP Group	3301	+ 76	3.1	25.0
14	7⅝	Border & Sthn Pet♦	10⅞		...	-91.4
122½	10½	Bougainville	11	– ¼	...	-16.4
609¾	399⅛	**BP**	514⅞	– 10½	4.8	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy♦	0		...	-0.7
8¼	1¾	Cadence Minerals♦	4¾	– ¼	...	-9.0
5½	2¾	Cadogan Energy	3¾		...	-11.2
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining♦	1500	+ 45	2.8	7.1
3¾	1¾	Caspian Sunrise♯	1⅞		...	3.5
244	125¼	Cent Asia Metals♦	149⅜	+ 1⅜	8.0	-4.7
2¼	1⅜	Chariot Ltd♦	1½		...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy♦	0		...	-6.3
0½	0¾	Corcel♦	0⅝		...	-2.1
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics♦	9½		...	-1.9
300½	108½	DRD Gold	170⅛	+ 10¼	2.4	14.4
0½	0⅛	ECR Minerals♦	0¼		...	-3.4
0½	0	Empyrean Energy♦	0		...	-0.4
5620	2370	**Endeavour**	3842	+ 206	3.4	18.5
28	9¾	EnQuest	22½	– ⅜	3.6	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining♦	2¼	– ⅛	...	15.3
2¾	0⅝	Europa Oil & Gas♦	1⅞	+ ⅛	...	-9.6
87¼	27¼	Ferrexpo♯	28⅛		...	-4.5
4472	1483	**Fresnillo**	2747	+ 118	4.1	19.7
80	3	Galantas Gold♦	22½	+ 1½	...	-6.1
12½	2⅞	GCM Resources♦	3⅝		...	-5.2
7½	2½	Gem Diamonds	3¼		...	-0.1
3¾	1⅝	Getech♦	3¼	+ ⅛	...	-7.4
707¼	275¼	**Glencore**	573¼	+ 22¼	2.2	...
0½	0⅛	Geo Exploration♦	0⅛		...	-4.5
4582½	2109¾	Gold Fields	2795½	+ 232½	4.2	...
21	6¼	Goldplat♦	16¾	– ¼	3.1	27.9
2	0¼	Goldstone Res♦	0⅝		...	-0.8
800	230	Greatland Resources♦	593½	+ 46	...	17.8
353¾	176	Griffin Mining♦	298		...	33.2
235	158¼	Gulf Keystone	169¼	– ⅜	7.5	32.7
858	246¼	Hochschild	479½	+ 28½	0.9	16.6
553	290½	Hunting	444	– 4½	2.2	22.8
0¼	0	Ironveld♦	0		...	-2.1
219¾	57⅜	ITM Power♦	102⅛	– 1¾	...	-13.9
5¼	2¼	Jubilee Metals♦	2½	+ ⅛	...	-3.4
1¼	0⅜	Karel Diamond Res♦	0⅝		...	-3.9
2¼	0½	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	1¼	+ ⅛	...	-10.9
345	178⅜	Kenmare Res	198	– 1¼	...	-0.7
5⅞	1⅜	Landore Res♦	1¾		...	-1.8
0¼	0⅛	Lansdowne Resources♦	0⅛		...	-1.5
4¾	2⅝	Lexington Gold♦	2⅞		...	-29.5
19¼	10½	Metals Exploration♦	13	+ ¼	...	16.7
0⅞	0¼	Nativo Resources♦	0¼		...	-0.1
4½	1	Nostrum Oil & Gas	4		...	-0.0
0⅝	0¼	Oriole Resources♦	0⅜		...	-17.2
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	10⅜	Orosur Mining♦	14¾	+ ¼	...	...
190½	58	Pan African Res	104¼	+ 7	2.1	19.6
33¼	6¾	Pantheon Res♦	12⅜	– ⅜	...	-43.9
27	12½	Parkmead Group♦	21½	+ ½	...	3.2
22⅝	5¾	Petra Diamonds	6½	– ⅛	...	-0.2
1¼	0½	Petrel Resources♦	0⅞		...	-4.0
1½	0⅝	Petro Matad♦	1⅛		...	-4.8
9	2¼	Plexus Holdings♦	3⅛		...	-1.2
920	672	Porvair♯	874	– 2	0.8	22.2
5½	2⅛	Prospex Energy♦	2⅜		...	-4.3
5	0⅞	Quadrise♦	1		...	-5.9
160	35	Reabold Resources♦	67		...	-37.5
0	0	Red Rock Res♦	0		...	-0.3
10416¼	5324½	Rio Tinto Ltd	9233¼	+ 209½	3.7	17.5
9117	4436½	**Rio Tinto**	7511	+ 198	4.6	16.5
0½	0⅛	Rome Resources♦	0⅜		...	-15.4
375	184¼	Serabi Gold♦	277	+ 29	1.8	5.2
302¾	146	Serica Energy♦	225	– 1⅞	7.1	-23.3
3758½	2553⅜	**Shell**	3280½	– 41	4.6	14.6
7	2¼	Shuka Minerals♦	2⅞		...	-2.1
13	1½	Sound Energy♦	1¾		...	-1.5
27	5½	Star Energy♦	24½	– 1¼	...	-4.4
4½	0⅝	Sunda Energy♦	1½		...	-1.4
0	0	Sunrise Resources♦	0		...	-2.3
0		Synergia Energy♦	0		...	0.5
0¼	0	Tertiary Minerals♦	0¼		...	-6.8
0⅞	0½	Thor Energy♦	0½		...	-0.6
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6325¾	– 37½	4.7	12.4
0	0	Tower Resources♦	0		...	-0.4
19½	3½	Tullow Oil	14¾	– 1	...	48.2
0	0	UK Oil & Gas♦	0		...	-0.2
13	2⅝	URU Metals♦	4	+ ⅛	...	-2.7
0⅝	0⅛	Vast Resources♯	0⅛		...	-0.5
9	1⅜	Westmount Energy♦	3¼		...	-8.3
1½	0½	Xtract Resources♦	1¼	– ⅛	...	-5.7
4⅜	2¼	Zephyr Energy♦	3⅜		...	-7.8

Professional & Support Services

4890	2980	4imprint	4890	+ 500	3.7	16.3
585	464	Andrews Sykes♦	575	+ 10	4.5	13.3
130	103½	BTG Consulting♦	106½	– 1½	4.3	20.1
2834	1981	**Bunzl**	2824	+ 30	2.6	20.0
416	215	Capita	252½	+ ½	...	-1.8
49⅞	23⅛	CEPS♦	39		...	-11.1
165	90	Christie Group♦	152½		2.3	30.0
2581¼	2000	**Compass**	2455¾	+ 37½	2.1	30.1
87	64½	Croma Security♦	70		3.4	12.2
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6385	+ 15	3.4	...
34	15	Diales Grp♦	32		4.7	24.6
7720	4970	**Diploma**	7675	+ 100	0.8	55.7
838	505	DiscoverIE	823	+ 24	1.6	27.3
114½	78⅜	Essentra	108		1.9	...
3987	2203	**Experian**	2851	– 9	1.8	23.4
330	110	FIH Group♦	135	+ 10	5.0	-3.3
850	588	Hargreaves Servs♦	804	– 2	5.0	8.6
5855	3519¾	**Intertek**	5840		2.8	26.8
250¾	163½	Int'l Workplace	188¾	+ 2	0.5	...
172½	123⅜	Johnson Service	150⅞	– ¾	3.2	16.2
554	360	Journeo♦	505	+ 20	...	20.8
254½	178⅜	Kier Group	247¾	+ 1½	3.1	19.4
1170	910	Latham (J)♦‡	1010		3.6	10.9
3700	2100	London Security♦	3600		2.7	18.6
298	204	LSL Property Servs	248	+ 3	4.6	14.9
100½	59⅛	Macfarlane	74½	+ 2¼	4.9	18.7
200	71¼	Maintel Holdings♦	72½		...	-6.1
28	15¼	Malvern Int'l♦	21½		...	-2.6
448½	310	Mears Group	430½	– 2½	4.1	7.7
282¼	101⅜	Michael Page	187¾	+ ⅝	4.6	64.8
214	134⅜	Mitie Group‡	207	+ ¼	2.2	31.4
15¾	0⅛	MobilityOne♯	6¾		...	-2.1
137	71⅜	Newmark Security♦	110		...	15.6
260	170	Norman Broadbent♦	185	– 10	...	5.8
158	84⅜	Northern Bear♦	123½		6.1	4.1
187½	110	NWF Group♦	144	+ 4	6.0	7.7
60	42	PCI-PAL♦	59		...	...
12½	7	Petards♦	10¼		...	-15.3
12⅞	7	PHSC♦	7¾		...	-2.6
0¾	0⅛	PowerHouse Energy♦	0¼		...	-3.1
64	41⅜	Record	44⅜	+ ⅝	8.1	11.3
978	772	Renew Holdings♦	920	+ 12	2.2	14.9
507	329⅝	**Rentokil**	369½	– 1¼	2.6	26.7
310	222	Restore♦	307	+ 2	2.4	-65.3
7	1⅞	River Global A♦‡	2½		...	-0.3
30	13⅛	Roebuck Food Group♦	26		...	-9.0
746½	536⅞	RS Group	741½	+ 13½	3.1	21.4
150	85	RTC Group♦	87½		7.7	6.2
120	68	RWS Holdings♦	115¾	– 1	5.5	-4.3
612	520	Science Group♦	585	+ 1	1.7	7.8
325¾	207	Serco	242⅜	– 3⅜	1.9	16.9
79⅜	54	Smiths News	72	– 1	7.7	6.2
30	13½	Software Circle♦	16½	+ ½	...	-77.4
52½	36⅝	Staffline Group♦	46	+ 2	...	11.8
273½	132⅛	SThree	270	+ 4½	5.3	19.7
350	146	Synectics♦	182½	– 2½	2.7	8.3
2	0½	Thruvision Group♦	0⅝		...	-0.6
74	46	Tribal♦	64	– 1	2.0	15.2
84¼	58	Vianet♦	66		3.6	46.2
490	294½	ZIGUP	464½	+ 2½	5.8	13.8

Retailing

117⅞	82½	AO World	97⅞	+ ¾	...	15.4
269¼	140	B&M European	232¼	+ 1¼	4.1	14.2
115¾	58¼	Card Factory	76⅝	+ ½	6.5	8.5
1648	1062	CVS Group	1289	+ 9	0.7	17.5
204	113	DFS Furniture	149	+ 6½	0.7	14.2
1249	707	Dunelm	892½	+ 6½	2.8	11.6
840	598	Frasers Group	813	– 13	...	9.4
2046	1407¼	Greggs	1933	– 13	3.6	16.1
248	123¼	Halfords	245	+ 1	3.7	16.1
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	833	+ 11½	2.6	16.9
895	640½	Inchcape	843½	+ 3	4.0	11.6
1⅜	0⅛	Imaging Biometrics	0⅝	– ⅛	...	-3.6
106½	64	**JD Sports**	92¾	+ 1½	1.3	10.8
372¼	240½	**Kingfisher**	322¾	+ 1¾	3.8	23.1
418⅜	301⅜	**Marks & Spencer**	409¾	– ¾	1.0	32.2
4	0⅝	Mothercare♦	0¾	– ⅛	...	0.6
93¼	61⅜	Naked Wines♦	73	– 1⅜	...	-7.9
15900	11200	**Next**	15660	+ 850	1.7	20.6
397⅞	140½	Ocado	211¾	+ 7¼	...	4.5
241⅜	167½	Pets at Home	213¼	+ 1¼	3.5	15.4
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	433	+ 1½	...	90.2
719	173¼	Saga	713	+ 21	...	...
380¼	291½	**Sainsbury's**	356	+ ½	3.8	20.6
1120	378⅜	WH Smith	440	– 5	...	-4.0
14	4½	Sosandar♦	13½		...	96.4
510⅜	406⅞	**Tesco**	480¾	+ 1¾	3.0	17.5
50	30½	Topps Tiles	36¼	+ 1⅞	8.6	11.8

Technology

252	140½	Alfa Financial	165	+ ⅝	5.8	16.2
307	195	Aptitude Software	195	– 1	2.8	26.7
129	55	Bango♦	61	– 3	...	-8.3
20	12	BATM Adv Coms	13	+ ⅛	...	-4.2
33	19⅜	Berkeley Res	25	+ 1	...	-65.4
3¼	1⅜	Blackbird♦	1⅜		...	-2.5
194	74	Cellebrus Tech♦‡	107	– 2	3.2	-119.2
28	12½	Cirata♦	14¼	– 1¾	...	-3.2
0⅜	0⅛	CloudCoCo♦	0⅛		...	0.5
4962	2222	**Computacenter**	4812	+ 34	1.6	32.8
286	173½	Concurrent Tech♦	255	– 5	0.5	43.5
13½	7½	Corero♦	8¼		...	-111.2
2644	988	Craneware♦	1316	+ 56	2.5	31.6
110	50	Crimson Tide♦	87½		...	20.8
9¾	5⅛	CyanConnode Hldgs♦	9¾		...	-8.4
15½	8	Dillistone Group♦	10¾		...	-7.4
0⅝	0	Forgent♦	0		...	-0.0
165⅛	94½	FDM Group	110½	– 3⅜	6.3	21.2
480	114	Filtronic♦	242	+ 9	...	...
265	180½	GB Group	231	+ 4	1.9	-7.5
51	24	Iliko♦	26		...	-6.5
138	56	Ingenta♦	63½		7.1	5.3
178	73	Intercede♦	110	– 2½	...	19.3
28½	11⅛	Iomart♦	12⅜	+ ¼	...	-1.5
72⅞	41½	IQE♦	42½	– 2¼	...	-11.3
4453½	912⅜	LG Electronics	1461⅛	– 3½	1.7	...
79	37	MTI Wireless♦	65½	– ½	3.1	15.1
14½	2	Nanoco Group	2½		...	-2.2
138	94½	Netcall♦	118		0.8	48.2
36	22	Northamber♦	24½		2.4	-1.7
60⅜	37½	Oxford Metrics♦	38⅛		8.5	-69.8
31	17	Pennant Int'l♦	29½		...	-5.9
447	210	Playtech	365¼	– 11¼	...	0.9
50	33½	Pulsar Group♦	35	– ½	...	-4.5
570½	398½	QinetiQ‡	546½	+ 4	2.0	27.2
117	88	RM	96	– 3⅜	...	36.9
6½	2½	Seeing Machines♦	4½		...	-11.0
69½	35½	Shearwater Group♦	61½		...	-1.5
1998	1083	Softcat	1975	+ 26	1.5	29.7
50	5	Sorted Group♯	9		...	-0.2
1018½	553⅜	Tele Ericsson	759½	– 5⅞	3.1	11.4
1200	771½	**The Sage Grp**	1013	+ 3½	2.2	26.8
91⅜	52½	Touchstar♦‡	85½		3.8	-6.4
435	280	Tracsis♦	332½	– 10	0.8	...
400	230	Triad Group‡	394	+ 4	2.3	39.7
330	210	Water Intel♦	307½		...	14.4
150	96½	Xaar	119	– 1	...	-27.7
17	8½	Zoo Digital♦	11¾	+ ¼	...	-4.2

Telecoms

436¼	206	**Airtel Africa**	327	– 6¾	1.6	23.7
242⅜	173	**BT Group**	201¼	– 1	4.1	18.3
169½	106	Currys	162⅝	+ ¼	1.8	10.5
1186	687	Gamma Comms	970		2.3	14.0
247½	116½	Helios Towers	195¼	– 2¾	0.9	71.1
0⅜	0⅛	Gana Media♦	0⅛		...	-3.7
1936	638	Telecom Plus	859	– 2	5.8	8.5
131⅜	82⅛	**Vodafone**	114⅜	– 2½	3.5	-80.9

Transport

260	203½	Braemar‡	228		3.1	31.5
5485	3365	Clarkson	4996	– 79	2.3	23.3
683½	332½	EasyJet	651¾	+ 14	2.0	9.9
240½	152½	FirstGroup‡	185¼	+ 1	3.9	8.6
554	320	Fisher (James)	476	+ 23	...	-54.7
492½	332½	**Intl Cons Air**	444½	+ 5⅞	1.5	7.3
685	458	Irish Cont	665	– 10	2.1	16.6
38⅛	17	Mobico Group	24⅞		...	-1.1
7	1½	Sutton Harbour♦	4¼		...	-0.4
1453	832	Wizz Air	1147	– 10	...	...

Utilities

220¼	151½	**Centrica**	151½	– 1⅜	3.7	-101.0
937½	613½	Drax Group	719½	+ 3	4.2	34.8
485	420	Jersey Electricity	440	– 5	5.0	12.3
1428½	1000	**National Grid**	1187½	– ½	4.1	18.1
606	439½	Pennon‡	457¾	– 1⅝	6.4	23.6
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	3082	+ 32	4.1	25.0
2767½	1597	**SSE**‡	2342	– 14	2.9	22.2
1497	1072	**United Utilities**	1417	+ 11	3.8	16.5

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2922	+ 36	2.9	5.4
394½	325	3i Infrastructure	383½	– ½	3.5	12.0
1758	1408¼	Aberforth Smlr	1714	+ 8	2.8	26.8
1391	1178	**Alliance Witan**	1386	+ 4	2.1	74.9
396	321	Artemis UK Future Lead‡	391½	– 3½	3.9	31.6
220	116½	Athelney Trust	165		6.1	14.5
273	235¼	AVI Global	265½	+ 1	1.7	52.4
194	154½	AVI Japan	167	+ 1	1.3	56.8
331	263	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	306	– 2	0.8	...
121⅜	91⅜	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	121	+ 1	0.6	...
1080	811⅜	Baillie Gifford Jpn	1070	+ 14	0.9	...
173⅜	123	Baillie Gifford SN	171	+ 1	0.4	...
227	180½	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	225	+ 2	2.8	36.1
153⅜	121⅜	Bankers Invstmt Tst‡	152½	+ 1	1.9	67.8
445	385	BH Macro GBP	416½	– 1½	...	19.6
1684	804	Biotech Growth	1660	+ 38	...	-873.7
289½	197	BlckRck Amer Inc	287	+ 4	5.2	...
205	118½	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	177	– 2	3.3	50.6
208	162½	BlckRck Fro Inv	192½	+ 1	4.0	25.6
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	606	+ 2	1.2	88.0
238	198	BlckRck Inc&Grth‡	229	+ 7	3.4	31.7
288½	230¼	BlckRck Smlr‡	276½	+ 3½	2.9	31.6
1072⅜	543¼	BlckRck Wld Min	956	+ 40	2.5	39.7
1665	1274	Brown Adv US Sm	1630	+ 20	...	-272.1
1582	1336	Brunner‡	1572	+ 8	1.7	56.4
395	312	Caledonia Inv‡	386½	+ ½	2.0	50.2
599	486	City of Lon IT‡	593	– 2	3.7	27.5
155⅜	87	Crystal Amber Fd	89	+ 2	-64.5	...
592	439⅜	CT Priv Eq Ord	508	+ 8	5.6	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc	362½	+ 3	3.7	29.9
120	92	CT UK HIT B‡	112	– ½	5.3	23.1
126	97	CT UK HIT‡	119½	+ 1¼	5.0	24.6
480¼	460	Dunedin Ent♯	475		...	...
860	737½	Edinburgh IT	854	+ 1	3.7	32.1
294½	186¼	Edin Wwide	243½	– ½	...	-219.4
957	782	European Opps♯	937		-170.8	...
1332	325¼	**F&C Inv Trust**	343½	+ 5	1.2	76.5
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	598	– 2	3.4	26.6
339	241	Fidelity China Sp	264½	– 5½	3.4	28.7
1574	811	FdityEmrgMkt	1426	– 10	1.4	62.0
442	367½	Fidelity European Trust	438	+ 3	2.3	38.8
472½	372	Fidlty Spec Val	470	+ 1½	2.2	38.3
915	706¼	Fins Gwth & Inc	817	+ 7	2.5	43.2
85⅛	69¼	GCP Infrastructure	83½		8.4	38.9
370	312	Global Opps Tst	334½	– 3	3.1	42.9
92½	86½	Golden Prospect‡	92		-13.7	...
68½	57½	Greencoat Renew	67	+ ½	-16.6	...
118⅞	92¼	Greencoat UK Wind	115½	+ ½	9.2	-13.3
344	250	Hansa Investment Co‡	334	+ 6	1.3	75.9
330	244	Hansa Inv Co A‡	320	– 1	1.4	72.7
3480	2653⅛	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	3445	+ 15	...	-58.0
212½	173½	Hend High Inc	207½	+ 1½	5.4	18.4
980	769	Hend Smlr	976	+ 8	3.0	37.4
3290½	2285	Herald Inv Trust	3060	+ 25	...	...
524	318½	HgCapital Trust	392	+ 2	1.3	...
141	107¼	HICL Infra	139½	+ ¼	6.1	10.1
1611½	1288¼	ICG Ent Tr	1462	+ 16	2.9	-111.8
494½	379	Impax Env Mkts	439	+ 5	1.2	88.9
519	368⅜	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr	497½	– 1	3.9	50.6
178½	150⅛	Invesco Bond Inc‡	171	+ ½	7.2	13.1
426	318	Invesco Glbl Eq Inc‡	426	+ 5	3.8	85.0
1258	1041	JPM American	1248	+ 6	0.9	...
652	392	JPM Asia Gro & Inc‡	574	+ 4	5.4	...
313	250½	JPM China‡	276	+ 2	4.9	71.0
984	787⅛	JPM Claverhs‡	972	– 4	3.8	28.8
310	181⅜	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	249	+ 3	0.2	...
181¼	118⅜	JPM Em Mkts‡	165¼	– ¼	4.6	71.8
666	548	JPMorgan Euro	632	– 1	2.5	34.8
221	145	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc	204	– 1	2.9	35.9
638	529¾	JPM GG&I	637	+ 6½	3.9	77.0
1098	799	JPM India‡	893	– 11	5.0	...
849	639	JPM Japan	831	+ 4	1.0	81.9
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	445½	+ ½	0.7	...
1278	977⅜	Law Debenture	1268	+ 6	2.9	34.0
190	143	Lowland Inv	186½		3.6	27.7
139⅛	138¼	Marwyn Val Inv	139		15.3	...
285⅛	234¼	Mercantile IT	285	+ 3½	2.9	30.8
685	536	Merchants Trust‡	678	+ 2	4.4	22.2
804	682	Mid Wynd	798	+ 4	1.0	...
1664	1352	Monks Inv Trust	1638	+ 18	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Sml‡	178	+ 2	0.9	91.8
1036	854⅜	Murray Income Trust	1022		4.0	26.5
372½	283½	Murray Intl‡	369		3.4	26.5
437	345	Pacific Assets Trust	420	+ 4	1.4	75.0
409	319½	Pantheon Intl	397	+ ½	...	-107.3
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**	3942	– 8	1.4	3.8
555	508	Personal Assets	554	+ 4	1.0	91.9
743½	384	**Polar CapTech**	680	+ 11	...	-926.5
83¼	63¼	Renewables Infra	78½	+ ¼	9.7	-14.5
2645	1922	RIT Cap Ptnr	2600	– 15	1.7	...
990⅜	490	Riverstone	598	– 5	...	-57.4
738	488¼	Schroder TotRt	709	+ 5	1.6	72.3
892	594	Schrd Asia Pac	828		1.6	62.7
376	310	Schrod Inc Gwth	375	+ 2	3.9	29.9
401	267	Schrod Jap Gwth	391	+ 5	3.1	56.6
776	652	Schrod UKMid‡	770	+ 10	2.9	30.8
17¼	12¾	Schroder UK PP Tr	17¼	+ ¼	...	-71.7
570	480⅛	Scot American	566		2.9	36.2
1563	1015¾	**Scot Mortgage**	1379½	– 31½	0.3	...
88	75½	Sequoia Eco‡	87	– ½	7.9	12.7
253	215¾	STS Glbl Inc Grwth	231	– 1	3.7	35.6
352	196⅝	Temp Emg Mkt	316½	+ 1½	1.7	58.7
428	329	Temple Bar	419½	– ½	3.7	30.4
198⅜	162¾	The Glbl Smaller	197¼	+ 3½	1.6	66.8
9	0⅝	Potentially AI	6⅞		-1.7	...
364½	291	TR Property	318½	– 3	5.1	20.1
198	187	UIL	192½		19.0	...
302	241¼	Utilico Emerging Mkt‡	291	+ 1	3.3	21.4
865	682	Vietnam Ent Inv	718	– 10	...	4.7
398	306½	Ww Health	374	+ 2	0.6	...

◆AIM company; ♯ Price at suspension; ‡ Ex dividend; ⁑ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; ᵛ figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

Exchange rates

Australia $	1.90927 (+0.0007)
Canada $	1.88681 (-0.00438)
Denmark Kr	8.71536 (+0.00102)
Euro	1.1656 (-0.0005)
Hong Kong $	10.558 (+0.012)
Hungary	421.92 (+0.76)
Indonesia	24124.86 (-18.3)
Israel	4.0462 (+0.0021)
Japan Yen	212.236 (+0.148)
New Zealand $	2.28995 (+0.00885)
Norway Kr	12.8226 (-0.0151)
Poland	5.01317 (+0.00835)
Russia	108.997 (-0.359)
S Africa	21.97713 (-0.04241)
Sweden Kr	12.78444 (-0.01646)
Switzerland Fr	1.08738 (+0.00027)
Turkey Lira	64.043 (+0.101)
USA $	1.3461 (+0.0011)

Gold/precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)

Bullion: Open $4077.9

Close $4228.206 **High** $4265.14

Low $4065.52

AM $4156.45 **PM** $4206.60

Platinum $1728.468

Silver $61.809

Palladium $1361.744

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 3.75%
ECB Refi 2.40%
Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%
Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copen

ADVERTISEMENT

"My hands were so stiff I couldn't even turn the key in my front door... until I discovered this gold gel"

After decades working with his hands, retired carpenter Phil Carter began struggling with stiffness in his fingers

Sitting with Phil Carter at his home in Lymington, it's hard to believe that just a few months ago the retired carpenter struggled to use his hands...

TODAY, he greeted me with a firm handshake and proudly showed me around his small workshop at the bottom of his garden, where he spends hours building wooden toys for his grandchildren. But not long ago, Phil feared those days were behind him.

Fastening buttons became a struggle

"For more than forty years I worked with my hands," Phil explained. "I was a carpenter, so I was always sawing, hammering or sanding something. But last year after I retired, my fingers started getting stiff. At first, it was only in the mornings. But over time, it got worse and worse. In just a few months, it got so bad that even simple everyday tasks became frustrating, and doing any carpentry was out of the question.

Some mornings my fingers felt locked. The moment that really shocked me was one evening when I got home and couldn't even turn the key in my own front door. I stood there thinking...what's happening to me?"

The doctor said it was part of ageing

Eventually, Phil decided to see his GP. "The doctor examined my hands and said it was most likely wear and tear in the joints," Phil said. "He explained it's something many people experience as they get older, and that it was all part of ageing. But what I wanted to know was how could I get my hands better again?. He just told me to take painkillers if I was in pain. But I didn't like the idea of relying on pills every day," Phil admits.

If you suffer from painful hands, knees, hips or back, read Phil's story.

Glucosamine in a gel made sense

The turning point came unexpectedly. "I bumped into an old friend who highly recommended Glucosamine Gold Gel that he used it on his stiff knees. As soon as he texted me the order line number, I ordered a couple of tubes.

"I'd heard of glucosamine and I know a lot of people take it in tablet form to support their joints. When the package arrived just a couple of days later, I was eager to put it to the test, so started using it straight away. Thankfully, the tube was really easy to squeeze.

I started to feel a difference

I massaged it into my fingers and knuckles every morning after showering, and again in the afternoon and just before bed. I didn't expect miracles, but after a couple of weeks, I started to feel a difference; my hands felt a bit looser and the stiffness didn't seem quite as bad." Encouraged, he continued using the gel daily.

Then something surprising happened

"After about a month, the difference became very noticeable," Phil said. "I could fasten my shirt buttons and open jars again without struggling. And the moment that really made me feel on top of the world was being able to go back into my workshop."

For the first time in nearly a year, Phil picked up his tools and began working again on a wooden blanket box he had abandoned.

"That felt fantastic. I finally felt like myself again."

It's made a real difference

Today Phil's back in his workshop again. "I honestly thought I'd never be able to do carpentry again. But this simple glucosamine gel has made a real difference for me. I dread to think how I'd be now if I hadn't heard about it."

Glucosamine Gold Gel is available directly from Snowden Healthcare. The easy-to-apply gel is designed to be massaged into areas that feel stiff or uncomfortable such as the hands, knees, hips, shoulders and back. To allow readers to try it for themselves, the company is offering a limited introductory promotion: a free tube when you buy two or two free tubes when you buy three. To order Freephone 0800 161 5670 and quote code: GG13.

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SNOWDEN

Theoretical physicist behind the 'God particle'
François Englert
Page 48

Register

Obituaries

Peter Gill

Theatre director, founder of the National Theatre Studio and playwright who brought working-class Cardiff to life on stage

Peter Gill was too nervous to watch the premiere of his first play, *The Sleepers' Den*, at the Royal Court Theatre in February 1965, which used the backdrop of a drab and dull family to compose what one critic called "a tragi-comedy of remarkable vitality and tension". Afterwards George Devine, the theatre's artistic director, found him hiding in the wardrobe department.

He need not have worried. Suitably encouraged, he went on to write more for the Royal Court including *Over Gardens Out* (1969), the tale of a homoerotic friendship between two teenagers, and *Small Change* (1976), angrily looking back on the destruction of the close-knit, postwar Cardiff community in which he was raised. Indeed, several of his plays revolved around the impoverished working-class communities of the Welsh capital. "That is the language I can hear," he explained.

An energetic, talkative and opinionated figure, Gill ran a parallel career as a director, notably staging the premieres of three previously overlooked DH Lawrence pieces: *A Collier's Friday Night*, *The Daughter-in-Law* and *The Widowing of Mrs Holroyd*. He recalled that there was no awareness of this being a significant archaeological rediscovery. "I just found the play [*A Collier's Friday Night*] and Devine said, 'Do it on a Friday night', so I did," he told The Times, adding elsewhere that "the absence of parasols and middle-class melancholy" had led to the neglect of these early 20th-century masterpieces.

With his white hair, blue eyes and tough, intelligent manner, Gill was a force to be reckoned with in the world of theatre, even if he never acquired the same public profile as Peter Hall, Trevor Nunn or Richard Eyre. He was assistant director of the Royal Court, founder director of the Riverside Studios in Hammersmith and set up the Studio at the National Theatre, and leaves a legacy of more than 20 plays in addition to translations and adaptations.

He was also a mass of contradictions: self-deprecating while grand; gregarious but conducting most of his social life by telephone; and rarely persuaded to go to a party, but swamped by admirers when he did. His encyclopaedic knowledge was renowned for stimulating new ideas. "He's got a library in his head, and he likes to share it," the actor Andrew Woodall said when Gill staged Patrick Hamilton's 1938 thriller *Gaslight* at the Old Vic in 2007. The actor Kenneth Cranham added: "I've never asked him a question that he's been unable to answer."

Peter Gill was born in Cardiff in 1939, the youngest of four children of George Gill, a dock worker, and Margaret (née Browne). His brothers, Bernard and Paul, followed their father into manual work and his sister, Mary, ran a care home. As a child he listened to radio dramas with his mother, while his father took him to the music-hall. At 14 he and his best friend discovered dance when the Royal Ballet came to Cardiff. "We saw [Margot] Fonteyn and [Michael] Somes dance Ashton's *Symphonic Variations*, we saw Violetta Elvin dance *Le Tricorne* with the Picasso decor," he told the Financial Times.

At St Illtyd's, his grammar school, Gill helped to paint the scenery for a class staging of *The Wind in the Willows*. "The effect was intoxicating," he said. The caretaker allowed him to watch amateur-dramatic society shows in the school hall in exchange for setting out the chairs and by 16 he was good enough at acting to enter drama school alongside Anthony Hopkins.

A year later he left Cardiff. His father drove him to the station. His mother believed, wrongly as it turned out, that the theatre would bring down the curtain on his Catholic upbringing. He joined Hopkins as assistant stage manager for Frank Dunlop's touring productions, acting as prompt for the "hetero hell" of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger*. By 2001 his views had mellowed sufficiently to direct Rufus Sewell in the title role of Osborne's *Luther*, about the instigator of the Protestant Reformation, at the National Theatre.

Like Harley Granville-Barker, whose 1905 play *The Voysey Inheritance* he staged at the National in 2006, Gill found his way into acting. He and Michael Caine were understudies for *The Long and the Short and the Tall*, Willis Hall's 1959 play about the British Army in Malaya that started life at the Royal Court. He ended up doing anything and everything for that theatre including for a very short time the press officer's job, a role to which he was spectacularly unsuited. "No one quite remembers how Peter Gill arrived in our lives. He was suddenly there, like a changeling ... he fastened like a succubus on John Dexter and me," the director William Gaskill recalled in his autobiography.

Over the next few years Gill flitted around minor roles on stage and screen. On television he was the boyfriend of a Welsh miner's daughter who wins a scholarship to Oxford in *A Matter of Degree* (1960), a Royal Navy radio officer in *City Beneath the Sea* (1962) and made a guest appearance in the detective series *No Hiding Place* (1964). On the big screen he was Lieutenant D'Arblay in the 18th-century mutiny tale *HMS Defiant* (1962) starring Alec Guinness and Dirk Bogarde, and Private 612 Williams in *Zulu* (1964), Cy Endfield's epic re-creation of the 1879 Battle of Rorke's Drift with Caine, Jack Hawkins and Stanley Baker.

Returning to the stage he was in an Arts Theatre revival of Ronald Duncan's *This Way to the Tomb* with incidental music by Benjamin Britten that was, he wrote, "unutterable tosh of a kind which abounded then". Such a direct approach to passing judgment was seen again when he described a brief flirtation with the Royal Shakespeare Company as "part rancorous and part arse-licking", having played Silvius in Michael Elliott's 1961 production of *As You Like It* starring Vanessa Redgrave. The experience was worthwhile for his after-show journey home to Hammersmith via a succession of Soho pubs and gay bars.

In 1963 Gill was Gaskill's assistant on the *York Mystery Plays*, an experience that inspired his Royal Court piece *The York Realist* (2001, revived by Robert Hastie at the Donmar Warehouse in 2018). Set in the early 1960s, the play's protagonist is George, a Yorkshire farm labourer who is cast as one of the crucifixion workmen in the Mystery Plays. He finds love with John, the production's young assistant director and a bourgeois Londoner, but cannot bring himself to follow John to the capital.

Tormented by anxiety, Gill abandoned acting at the age of 24. "I became increasingly interested in the art of theatre, in animating the theatre, which seemed to lie in directing," he explained. In 1964 he was appointed assistant director to Stephen Frears at the Royal Court.

Since arriving in London, he had lived in Hammersmith, where he was invited to be involved in a new community arts project. The Riverside Studios opened in 1976 with his staging of *As You Like It* starring Zoë Wanamaker and quickly became a magnet for young artists and memorable productions, including his landmark staging of *The Cherry Orchard* in 1978. Bernard Levin wrote in The Sunday Times that the play had "never, in my experience, been at once so harrowing and so glittering; nor its fragile rhythms so finely, surely spun, its development so natural, human and real".

In 1980 Peter Hall invited Gill to be associate director at the National Theatre. Four years later he established its Studio, an experimental space dedicated to developing playwrights, directors and actors that lasted until Eyre succeeded Hall. Mustering all the diplomacy he could manage, Gill explained that "Richard had a different approach to management", while Eyre wrote that he could not accept a vision of the Studio as a laboratory that must never produce commercial work.

Nevertheless, Gill remained associate director of the National until 1990. Among the highlights of his tenure was *Mean Tears* (1987), which has at its centre a relationship between two men that is threatened when one of them, played to perfection by Bill Nighy, has a wandering eye for the ladies.

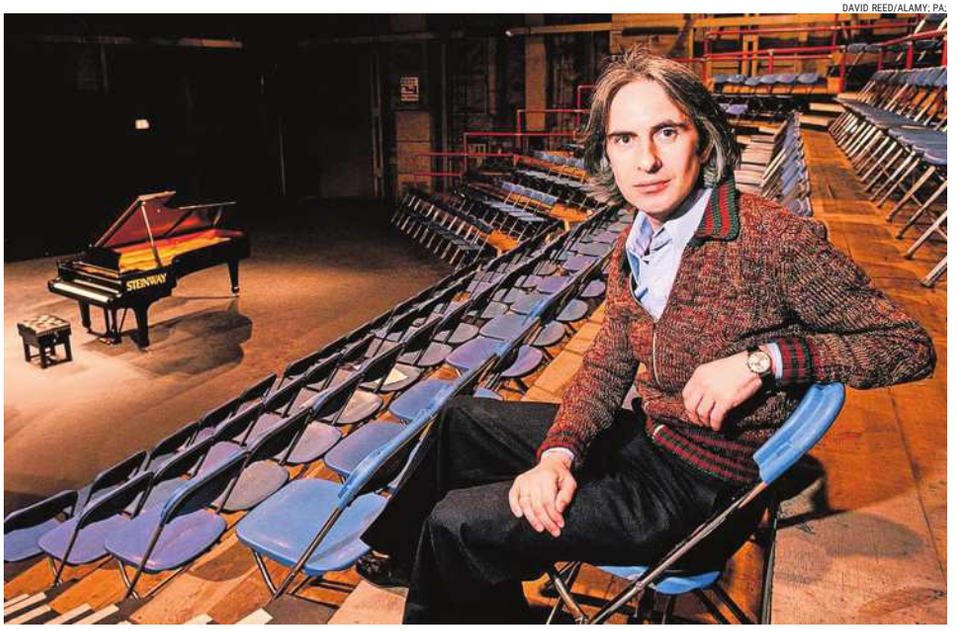
Elsewhere Gill directed a few programmes for radio and television. He also turned his hand to opera including *The Marriage of Figaro* for Opera North (1987) that was notable for the way he focused on projecting the story with utmost clarity and a Queen Elizabeth Hall staging of Harrison Birtwistle's double bill *Down by the Greenwood Side* and *Bow Down* (also 1987). Returning to Osborne's work, he directed *Epitaph for George Dillon* at the Comedy Theatre with Joseph Fiennes in 2005.

The following year he was the subject of a month-long festival at the Crucible Theatre in Sheffield, the centrepiece of which was his hauntingly powerful *Original Sin*, inspired by Frank Wedekind's so-called Lulu plays but following the changing fortunes of a beautiful boy rather than a girl. As with many of his plays, he directed the work himself. Latterly he shared the directing, including in *Something in the Air* (2022), a slim and sedentary two-hander about a pair of septuagenarians living in a care home that was co-directed by Alice Hamilton for Jermyn Street Theatre.

The one genre Gill eschewed was musicals. "I remember going to see *The Sound of Music* when I was 24 and thinking, 'This is bollocks, the Vietnam War is going on. We're watching this and they're napalming people'," he told The Guardian, though he later clarified his position, explaining: "I have no problem with populism ... It's just that I came into theatre at a time when its purpose was to be serious."

Peter Gill OBE, playwright and theatre director, was born on September 7, 1939. He died on August 3, 2026, aged 86

DAVID REED/ALAMY; PA



Gill in 1978 when he staged The Cherry Orchard at the Riverside Studios; Gill, fourth left, next to Peter Hall with other luminaries of the National Theatre in 1984; below, Zoe Tapper and Joseph Fiennes in Epitaph for George Dillon by John Osborne, directed by Gill in 2005

'I came into theatre at a time when its purpose was to be serious'

Register

François Englert

Modest physicist and Nobel laureate behind the 'God particle' that 'allowed the world that we know — and ourselves — to exist'

The first thing François Englert moved into his office upon being appointed a physics professor at the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB) was a second-hand mattress. It was Englert's firm belief that the best breakthroughs were reached through inductive, rather than deductive, thinking, and he did all of his best inductive thinking lying down: "If you think deductively, you only discover what you suspected at the beginning," he said. "With the other method, you unleash your unconscious brain."

Music was another important part of the equation: "It happens sometimes that we better perceive the world of fundamental research by listening to a Mozart opera than by attending a university lecture."

In 1959 Englert took a temporary research contract at Cornell University and discovered a research partner who equalled his scientific creativity and love of music. Robert Brout picked Englert up at the airport, and once they got talking they didn't stop. "This first encounter lasted nearly the entire night," Englert recalled. "When we finally parted ways, we knew we would be fast friends."

They spent two years working together on the study of solids, and when Englert finally returned to Belgium in 1961, Brout followed. It was there that the two physicists developed their most significant theory, the one that decades later would earn Englert a Nobel prize: the Brout-Englert-Higgs mechanism, of which a particular boson — now known as the Higgs boson or "God particle" — is the physical manifestation.

The mechanism, first detailed in a 1964 paper by Englert and Brout, provided a much sought-after explanation for how subatomic particles acquire mass. Englert and Brout theorised that these particles, rather than generating their mass themselves, acquire it through interactions with an invisible field of energy that permeates the universe. These interactions prevent the particles from travelling at light speed, thereby giving them mass. "This is what allowed the world that we know, and ourselves along with it, to exist," Englert explained.

The same theory was put forward weeks later by the British physicist Peter Higgs, and, following an erroneous citation by the physicist Steven Weinberg, the "Brout-Englert-Higgs boson" soon became known as the "Higgs boson". For his part, Englert didn't mind whom it was named after: he himself referred to it as the "scalar boson", which, he said, better described its nature.

Englert and Brout had no means of proving their theory, and for much of the scientific community it was too abstract to be of interest. "We were a little bit sad that people didn't seem to pay attention," Englert said. Regardless, after verifying their hypothesis, the two physicists headed out to a café and ordered a bottle of champagne. "We had the impression that at the end it would work, and so we celebrated," Englert said. It would take 50 years, the construction of the Large Hadron Collider, and the discovery of the Higgs boson before the rest of the world would celebrate with them.

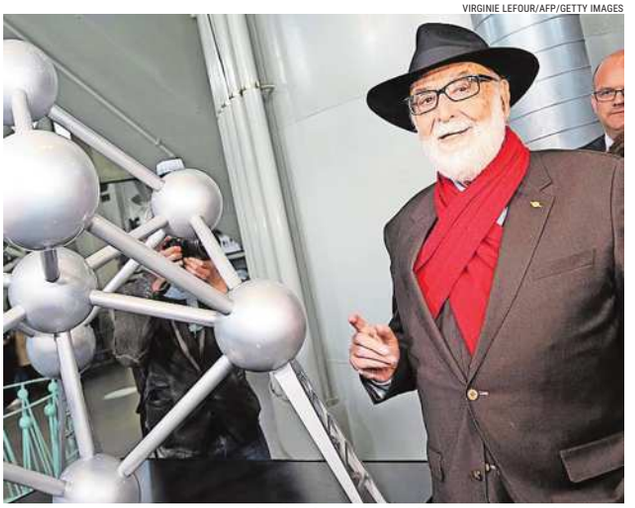
François Englert was born in 1932 in Etterbeek, Belgium, where his Polish-Jewish parents, Szmul-Josek and Bajla Englert, worked in a small textiles shop. Englert was a precocious child: he taught himself to read before starting school by sounding out the advertisements on the tram, and was moved up

'We were a little bit sad that people didn't seem to pay attention,' he said

a year shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War.

One morning in 1940, Englert's father burst into his room and announced that Germany had invaded Belgium. Englert, only seven years old, threw up in fear. The occupying Nazi regime soon began instituting anti-Jewish policies: Englert was required to wear a yellow star to school, and his parents' store was seized as a "Jewish asset. They finally fled the city in July 1942, weeks before the Gestapo and the SS began making mass arrests.

VIRGINIE LEFOUR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Englert in 2014. It took 50 years for the theory he put forward to be confirmed

The family split up to avoid detection, and for a year Englert was hidden with a family of restaurant owners in the secluded village of Lustin. There the ten-year-old played his own small part for the local resistance movement, which tasked him with counting the carriages of passing German trains to assist with their sabotage efforts.

He was reunited with his family in 1943, and they hid together in the village of Annevoie with the help of a vicar, who baptised Englert so that he could attend the local Catholic boarding school. Finally, in 1944, British and American troops liberated the region, and the family returned to Brussels.

Englert returned to school at the Athénée Royal de Koekelberg, before enrolling at ULB to study engineering. He graduated summa cum laude in 1955, but by then he had lost interest in applied physics and so turned down a well-paid directorship at a French technology company.

Englert married Esther Dujardin, another student, in 1955. They had three children, Michèle, Anne and Georges, before divorcing. Englert's second marriage, to Danielle Vindal, lasted from 1971 to 1985. They had two children, Sarah and Hélène. Englert is survived by his five children and his third wife, Mira Nikomarow, whom he married in 1991.

Through his study of semiconductors, Englert was introduced to — and captivated by — the recondite field of quantum physics. In 1959 he completed a PhD on the subject, and travelled to Cornell to work with Brout soon after.

After the publication of their landmark 1964 paper, Englert and Brout continued to work on questions of quantum field theory and the "infinitely small", but also did significant work at the other end of the scale, producing papers on cosmology and the genesis of the universe. Englert continued to teach at ULB and also spent time at Cern's highly collaborative theoretical physics department. "I find interchange and partnership with other researchers to be essential," Englert said. "For me, friendship in research is a huge motivating factor."

In the late 1990s, Englert, Brout and Higgs's discovery at last began to receive recognition. In 1997 they were jointly awarded the European Physical Society prize "for their hypothesis of the existence of a new elementary particle, the boson, responsible for the emergence of non-zero mass particles". The Wolf prize and the JJ Sakurai prize followed.

On July 4, 2012, researchers at Cern announced the discovery of the Higgs boson, at last confirming the theory first put forward by Englert and Brout in 1964. Higgs broke down in tears. For Englert, sitting next to him, it was a bittersweet moment: Brout had died in 2011, only a year too soon to share this momentous occasion with them.

It was announced that Englert and Higgs had been awarded the Nobel prize for physics in 2013. There was thunderous applause for Englert at the ULB campus, and journalists gathered outside his Brussels apartment. Englert was ennobled in Belgium as a baron by King Albert the same year.

His Nobel prize had been decades in the making, but, for Englert, it was not quite the highlight of his career. "I have to admit that the thrill was even greater in 1964," he said, remembering the day he and Brout first validated their hypothesis. It may have been a blessing that their findings had taken so long to confirm: Englert soon discovered that being a Nobel prizewinner meant sacrificing much of his time to giving talks and interviews. "I am very happy not to have received it when I was 50 years old," he quipped. "It would have posed a real problem for my research."

François Englert, theoretical physicist, was born on November 6, 1932. He died on June 18, 2026, aged 93

Wang Quanying

Red Army veteran thought to be the last female survivor of China's Long March on which she served as guide, cook and nurse

Wang Quanying, a 14-year-old orphan and domestic servant, was being abused by her wealthy employer when the Red Army's Fourth Front arrived in her home town in Sichuan province, southwest China, in 1935. They were taking part in what became known as the Long March.

At first she kept her distance from the Communist force, which was made up largely of peasants and workers. However, inspired by their discipline and conduct she began to attend their meetings, many led by female officers. "They dressed neatly, never disturbed the people and were never harsh with the villagers," she said.

Wang was among about 8,000 young women who signed up, 90 per cent of them from Sichuan. Putting on her Red Army uniform and cutting off her long, plaited hair, she served as a guide, cook and nurse in the Women's Independent Regiment. "The bugle call was the order: Forward! Forward!" she told the People's Daily in November last year.

She carried a weapon, marched with the soldiers and slept in the wild. Her role included fetching water and *qing wozi* (clearing nests) operations, searching for and confiscating goods that had been stockpiled by the wealthy. When medical supplies ran short, she treated the sick with the herbal medicines and folk remedies of her childhood. At night, she watched over her patients. "Some managed to pull through, while others never opened their eyes again the next day," she said.

Although Mao Zedong's Long March became a founding myth of the People's Republic, in reality it was a historic 6,000-mile retreat from southeast to northwest China by Communist forces escaping Chiang Kai-shek's nationalist troops. It was also something of a military disaster: of the 90,000 Red Army soldiers who set out from the little town of Yudu in October 1934, only a few thousand survived the year-long trek to Shaanxi. Yet the march established Mao as the Chinese Communist Party's leader and remains a defining symbol of endurance, sacrifice and revolutionary determination.

By March 1936 Wang's unit was in Danba county, also in Sichuan province, where they were engaged in a fierce battle with the ruling Kuomintang party's 24th Army. "Bullets whizzed past my ears but didn't hit me; even the company commander said I was lucky to be alive," she said. Kuomintang forces damaged the bridge across the county river, but the Fourth Front still managed to retreat over it. Wang was with a group of wounded soldiers and unable to cross.

Now separated from her unit, Wang spent more than a month trudging across snow-capped mountains, surviving on wild grass and melted snow. Without proper footwear she lost a toe from her left foot to frostbite. Unable to rejoin the Red Army or return home, she wandered into Sanjiang, in Wenchuan county, disguising her identity and using an assumed name.

Only in the 1980s did her role in the Long March become known, thanks to a government project to investigate and identify Red Army soldiers who had become separated from their comrades. Having been recognised she received a Certificate of Stranded Red Army Veteran, providing her with official welfare and medical provision.

Increasingly Wang was fêted as a great survivor and honoured with commemorative medals. By the time of her death she was thought to have been the last female soldier to have taken part in the Long March. Asked how she survived, she replied: "Following the Red Army, with light in my heart, I was not afraid of hardship."

She was born Wang Guixiang in Jinchuan county in Sichuan province in 1921, the same year the Chinese Communist Party was founded. Her parents were impoverished Tibetans who died shortly after her first birthday and she was raised by an uncle. When she was five she began working for the family of a local official. Her daily routine included herding cattle and sheep, and grinding grain. To bathe she was tied by her employer to a rope and thrown into the icy river.

Having settled in Sanjiang after the Long March, she lived the life of an ordinary peasant. She married Liu Fuguang, with whom she had five children, although only two daughters survived: Liu Guihua, who worked for the government, and Liu Guifang, a doctor. They grew up knowing little of their mother's experiences other than the revolutionary song she hummed: "Nine bends on the snake-skin ridge, a lookout pole on the empty ridge, the lookout pole fell and the road was lost, we shivered from the cold when we reached the snow mountains, and were starving when we reached the grassland."

After the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949 she changed her name to Wang Quanying, meaning "all the Red Army soldiers in the world are heroes". In 2006 she moved to the city of Dujiangyan and in May 2022 was interviewed for the China Central TV documentary series *The Song of the Long March*.

Well into her 11th decade the elderly and illiterate Wang was still singing revolutionary songs, raising her right hand in salute. Her eyesight remained sharp and she enjoyed needlework, donating her handmade cushions to schools and revolutionary education centres. Her one regret, she said, was not being able to complete the Long March. She told Wang Youping, a professor at Sichuan Provincial Party School who interviewed Sichuan female survivors of the march, that the secret to her longevity was "a good attitude, a vegetarian diet, compassion and a love of doing good deeds".

Wang Quanying, veteran of China's Long March, was born on June 23, 1921. She died on July 22, 2026, aged 105

Law Report

Turning ignition key could count as 'driving'

Court of Appeal
Published on August 6, 2026

Rex v OFM

Before Lord Justice Edis, Lady Justice Whipple, Judge Conrad KC
[2026] EWCA Crim 599
Judgment May 15, 2026

Where the defendant, who had consumed cocaine, unlocked a car in a car park, opened the driver's door, leant in from outside to turn on the ignition to warm the car up, without intending to drive it or cause it to move, and it moved forward sharply under its own momentum carrying him with it and colliding with a child in a stroller, killing the child, there was evidence on which a properly directed jury could conclude the defendant's acts in relation to the car amounted to "driving" it.

The Court of Appeal, Criminal Division so held when allowing the appeal by the Crown under section 58 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 against the ruling of the trial judge in the Crown Court that there was no case to answer by the defendant OFM on count 1, causing death by dangerous driving contrary to section 1 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, and on count 2, causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs contrary to section 3A(1)(ba) of the 1988 Act.

The issue on this appeal was whether there was evidence on which a properly directed jury could conclude that his acts in relation to the car amounted to "driving" it. The judge had answered that question in the negative.

The court published an anonymised version of its reserved judgment, pending the trial, because it contains a significant point of law.

Louis Mably KC for the Crown; **John Hipkin KC** and **Dean Pulling**, assigned by the Registrar of Criminal Appeals, for the defendant.

LORD JUSTICE EDIS, giving the judgment of the court, began by setting out the facts agreed for the purposes of this appeal.

The defendant had unlocked the car, and then opened the driver's door. Intending to warm up the car by starting the engine, he put the key in the ignition and turned it. When he did this he was standing outside the car, leaning in. Apart from starting the ignition, he had no other interaction with the controls.

Once the ignition was started, the movement of the car was captured on CCTV. From a standing start, it moved forward sharply under its own momentum (the wheels having stopped spinning). It moved out of its parking bay, across the driving lane of the car park (a width of 5.93m), before colliding with the child's stroller.

Once the car started moving, the defendant moved along with it, and by the time of the first impact with the stroller he appeared to have been leaning into the car to some extent, and may have been being carried or dragged along by the vehicle. From the CCTV evidence, his lower limbs remain outside the vehicle throughout.

The defendant said in his police interview that he was unable to stop the car because he was unable to put his foot on the brake or reach the handbrake. Expert analysis confirmed that either would have been difficult in the position he was in, being alongside but essentially outside the car.

The expert analysis confirmed that a combination of the fact that the car did not have a clutch ignition interlock, that the car had been left in gear, and that the handbrake was not pulled to its maximum resulted in the car being propelled forward when the ignition was started. Had the handbrake been pulled to the maximum the car would have stalled and not moved forward in the way that it did. There was no mechanical defect which contributed to the incident, although more modern cars had safety systems which would prevent the forward momentum that arose in this case.

The defendant had consumed cocaine prior to the incident. This led to him having benzoylecgonine in his blood reading at a level almost five times the legal driving limit at the material time.

In the court's judgment, the question for the jury was whether they were sure that, in switching on the ignition and starting the engine of the car, the defendant did an act which amounted to "driving" it. In most cases the answer to that question would be that it did because switching on the engine of a car was an act which involved control over its movement and was, in ordinary language, a necessary part of conduct which amounted to "driving" although the particular facts of the case might lead the jury to conclude that it did not.

The alleged conduct had to involve the alleged driver "in a substantial sense controlling the movement and direction of the car" which was a necessary but not a sufficient condition and the activity also had to fall within the ordinary meaning of the word "driving". The outcome might turn on "the extent and degree to which the defendant was relying on the use of the driver's controls" and the dividing line was not always easy to draw.

When the defendant turned the ignition key in the lock the fact the car was stationary did not preclude the act from being "driving". Even if at the time the driver did not intend the car should move, it would be open to a jury to conclude that the act amounted to "driving" the car. Although intention was relevant to whether conduct amounted to driving, it was not decisive.

He caused the vehicle to move by starting the engine by turning the key in the ignition which, in most cases, was the point at which driving would start. A careful driver would have got into the driving seat to check whether the handbrake was on and the car in gear before starting the engine.

The fact that the defendant started the engine when he was not in a position to control the consequences of that act by using the brake, clutch or steering wheel did not prevent it from being an act of driving either. He created a situation where he had started the car engine without being in a position to control the car's movement because he had chosen to stand on the pavement while doing it, depriving himself of a means of doing so.

The jury could conclude that the act of starting the engine of a car when standing on the pavement beside it was an act of "driving". A driver "controlling the movement of the car" did not have to exercise effective control over it.

In the court's judgment the prosecution were right to say that this was a matter for the jury. Accordingly, the appeal would be allowed, and the proceedings should be resumed before the Crown Court.

Solicitors: **Crown Prosecution Service.**

Lives remembered

Neil Reading

Nick Candy writes: There are very few people you meet in business and life who become genuinely irreplaceable. Neil Reading (obituary, July 31) was one of them.

When my brother Christian and I were building Candy & Candy, the world often felt fast-moving, unpredictable and, at times, very chaotic. Neil was the opposite. Whatever was happening around him, he remained calm, measured and reassuring. He had an extraordinary ability to steady the ship.

I have often reflected that Candy & Candy would never have become what it did without Neil. He wasn't someone who wanted the limelight or recognition. He simply got on with the job, quietly making things happen, solving problems and opening doors that few others could. He cared deeply about the people he represented. Clients trusted him because they knew he genuinely had their interests at heart, and he would always go the extra mile. At the same time, he had built incredible relationships with journalists and editors, founded on mutual respect, honesty and decades of friendship.

Neil also knew how to enjoy life. He loved a long lunch, full of conversation, laughter and always a great bottle of wine. Yet no matter how long the afternoon became, he would somehow remember every detail of every conversation with laser-focused precision.

In many ways, Neil was an old soul living in a modern world. He valued loyalty, discretion, kindness and relationships above everything else. Those qualities are increasingly rare, which made him all the more special.

The world is a much poorer place without Neil in it. I will miss his wisdom, his friendship and, above all, his unwavering presence. He leaves behind a legacy not measured by headlines or accolades, but by the enormous affection and respect of everyone fortunate enough to have known him.

Donald Legget

Hugh Twiss writes: Lord Terrington in Lives Remembered alluded to Donald Legget's skills in launching the Leander cadet scheme. However, Donald (obituary, August 1) also played a key role in persuading Derek Drury, who had had great success with Emanuel School crews, to become Leander's head coach. Donald said that he learnt much about coaching from him and it was this string of successes that really launched Donald's long coaching career.

In 1972 Donald and I also drove the GB rowing team's boat-trailer out to the Munich Olympics. I could fill many columns with our escapades, which included driving into the athletes' village every day to visit the crews. We did not have a permit, but a forceful call from Donald to the guards on the gate that he was the British ambassador, or something similar, always got us in. That is until the day we were leaving, when nothing could get past the security due to the unfolding Israeli hostage drama.

John Livingstone writes: As both my sons rowed at their school, and then university and for Great Britain, we came across Donald on multiple occasions. He was a larger-than-life personality whose ability to weld together a team of disparate athletes into a winning crew was legendary.

On one occasion at a regatta, his rowers were about to carry out their boat from the boat shed. Before that, the coach traditionally gathers them round to discuss race tactics.

The crew gathered round the great man in expectation, looking to receive insight, a race plan, encouragement or words of wisdom. The crew hushed ... DL began to speak ... "If you get a chance to ..." The crew craned forward and listened intently. "If you get a chance to f*** off, then ... f*** off!"

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Births, Marriages and Deaths

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WHILE he was praying, his face changed its appearance, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly two men were there talking with him. They were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in heavenly glory and talked with Jesus about the way in which he would soon fulfil God's purpose by dying in Jerusalem. Luke 9.29-31 (GNB)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

HABERTON on 25th July 2026 to Sophie (née Paine) and Scott, a daughter, Charlotte Aster Molly, sister to Oscar. Loved dearly by all.

ROSEDALE on 23rd July 2026 to Imogen (née Hatvany) and Jonathon, a daughter, Olivia Diana.

Anniversaries

SEDGWICK : CHURCHWARD
Platinum wedding anniversary On 6th of August 1956 at St Andrew's Church, Ashburton, Peter to Mary. Now residing in Odiham, Hampshire. They are delighted to be celebrating this very special anniversary and happy occasion with their children Paul and Carey and grandchildren Charlotte, Annabel, Sophie, Lucy, Ben, Emma and Katie.

Deaths

ALLISON Joseph Philip Sloan (Philip) on 26th July 2026 died peacefully at home surrounded by his family. Husband to Carol; father to Austyn, Catherine, Joe, Peter; brother to Louise; doting Grandaddy. Retired headmaster of St Mary's Music School, Edinburgh; deputy head of Belhaven Hill, Dunbar; taught at Watson's and Heriot's. Funeral Monday 17th August at noon at Warriston Crematorium. No flowers but donations to RNLI. A livestream of service available from watch.obitus.com Username: rani0939 Password: 056957

COMYN James Alistair on 13th July 2026. Beloved husband of Alison, father, father-in-law and much-loved Barbar to his granddaughters. Funeral service at St Nicholas Church, East Grafton, on Wednesday 12th August, at 2pm. Donations if desired for Brain Research UK and The Gorilla Organization c/o Dianne Mackinder Funeral Service, Wagon Yard, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 1LH. Tel: 01672 512444 or team@diannemackinderfs.co.uk

HAVERS Patti passed away peacefully on 19th July 2026. Much-loved mother of Holly and Dan, grandmother of Poppy, Jake, Willow and Arlie, and wife of Philip. She will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved her. A private cremation will be held locally followed by a service of celebration and thanksgiving at Chelsea Old Church on 22nd October 2026 at 11.30am. Donations in her memory to the Parkinson's Centre for Integrated Therapy, Canterbury — pcit.org.uk

HODSON Neil James (oncologist). Beloved husband of Clare for 60 years and much-loved father of Andrew and Matthew and grandad of seven. Died on 18th July. Requiem Mass at St Edward's RC Church, Keymer, BN6 8NA, on Monday 17th August at 2pm. Instead of flowers, donations in Neil's memory to St Peter and St James Hospice c/o Bowley Funeral Service, 30 Keymer Road, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 8AN.

HOLLAND
Gerald Brendon
Born 11th August 1939

Gerry passed away peacefully on 17th July 2026, aged 86.

A service of remembrance will be held at St Mary the Virgin Church, Rectory Road, Little Burstead, Billericay, CM12 9TR, on Monday 7th September 2026 at 2pm.

Family and friends are warmly invited to attend.

MARTIN John Patrick died peacefully after a short illness on 20th July, aged 89. Loving and devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. A remarkable man who will be sorely missed. Funeral to be held at All Saints Church, Sparkwell, on Tuesday 11th August at 11am. All family and friends are invited. No flowers by request, donations if desired for Dame Hannah Rogers and Moorfields Eye Hospital can be made online at wcpltd.com/donate
All inquiries: Walter C Parson, Plympton, PL7 1QW. Tel: 01752 343848.

MCKINLEY Sylvia Ruth (née LeFeuvre) died peacefully on 24th July 2026, aged 96. Much-loved mother to Nigel, Susan and Stephen and grandmother to Max, Lydia, Maddy, Rory and Jodie. Will be dearly missed.

TAIT Philippa Helen died on 28th July 2026 at home, aged 95. Beloved wife of the late Admiral Sir Gordon Tait, dearly loved mother of four, grandmother of twelve and great-grandmother of nine.

Court Circular

St James's Palace
5th August, 2026
The Duchess of Edinburgh, Patron, Hallé Concerts Society, this evening attended a Promenade Concert at the Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, London SW7.

St James's Palace
5th August, 2026
The Princess Royal, Patron, the Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo, accompanied by Vice-Admiral Sir Tim Laurence, today attended the Tattoo Dress Rehearsal at Redford Barracks, Colinton Road, Edinburgh, and was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh (Councillor Robert Aldridge, the Rt Hon the Lord Provost).

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Legal Notices

Notice of proposed payment out of capital for purchase of own shares
SCULPT10 LABS LTD

Company number: 15351364 Registered office: WSM, Connect House, 133-137 Alexandra Road, London SW19 7JY
Pursuant to section 719 of the Companies Act 2006 (CA 2006), SCULPT10 LABS LTD (Company) hereby gives notice that:
The Company has approved, by special resolution passed on 2 August 2026, a payment out of capital for the purpose of acquiring 1,515 of its own seed preferred shares of £0.001 each in the capital of the Company by purchase.
The amount of the permissible capital payment (as defined in section 710 of the CA 2006) for the shares in question is £782,964.92.
The directors' statement and the auditors' report required by section 714 of the CA 2006 are available for inspection at the Company's registered office as stated above.
Any creditor of the Company may at any time within the five weeks immediately following the date of the said special resolution apply to the court under section 721 of the CA 2006 for an order preventing the payment out of capital.

Law

Corruption, killer thriller and life in law

From fighting Putin to a Ruth Ellis-inspired novel, there's plenty to enjoy in our reviewers' legal picks

MISHA JAPARIDZE/AP; HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS LTD

Mikhail Khodorkovsky in a Moscow court in 2005. From top: Ruth Ellis; Gillian Taylforth at her 1994 case against The Sun

Suing the Kremlin: The Battle for Putin's Billions by Martin Sixsmith
Swift Press £25

In the war between the oligarchs and Vladimir Putin that culminated in the still-birth of Russian democracy, few of the mega-wealthy Russian industrialists were motivated by a sense of civic duty.

Boris Berezovsky, who misguidedly helped Putin to seize power in 1999, admitted he had committed many "unrighteous acts" in the name of greed. He was found dead in 2013 in the bathroom of his Surrey mansion, his demise blamed on Putin.

Berezovsky and others fled, yet one oligarch refused to leave Mother Russia, choosing to stand and fight Putin, knowing he could not win. Mikhail Khodorkovsky had accumulated huge wealth in the Boris Yeltsin years before buying a controlling stake in Russia's oil conglomerate Yukos. It brought him political influence for a bargain-basement investment that was later valued at about £4.5 billion.

Khodorkovsky turned Yukos into a western-style Russian multinational that pioneered rules-based, transparent business practices that he hoped would eventually become a model for all Russian commerce.

Khodorkovsky also had political ambitions and in a dramatic showdown with Putin in the Kremlin in 2003 he accused his host of overseeing a corrupt state. Six months later he was arrested and imprisoned for ten years before finally escaping Russia in 2013.

Martin Sixsmith's book excellently sets out the conditions that put Putin in power and chronicles his descent from a proponent of democratic government to gangsterism. Sixsmith's primary focus is on the 20-year slog of a legal battle for compensation triggered by Putin's confiscation of Yukos.

Such are the entrenched positions of the parties and the complexity and attritional nature of the litigation, the case makes Charles Dickens's *Jarndyce and Jarndyce* lawsuit in *Bleak House* seem like a straightforward dispute over a small family inheritance.

In 2014 the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague — acting as the registry for a number of arbitral tribunals — ruled in favour of the Yukos shareholders, awarding them $50 billion (£37 billion), a decision upheld by the Dutch supreme court last October.

The shareholders have already begun using the judgment to start to liquidate their compensation from Russian-held assets globally. But the Russian federation has signalled that the legal battle is far from over.

Along the way, many western lawyers acting for the Russian state have become very wealthy from legal fees. One British lawyer, however, paid with his life. The Mayfair solicitor Stephen Curtis, 45, took over the holding company for Yukos after Khodorkovsky's arrest in 2003 and began secretly acting as an informant for the National Criminal Intelligence Service, which was investigating criminal businessmen linked to the Kremlin. He died in a helicopter crash in Dorset the next year.

At the inquest it emerged that his properties were bugged and that he had told a relative that should he die prematurely it would not be an accident.

Robert Verkaik is the author of *The Writer and the Traitor* (Headline)

A Fatal Love by Louisa Treger
Bloomsbury £8.99

Louisa Treger has had a stroke of good fortune with the timing of her latest book, out this month, which tells a fictionalised story of the life of Ruth Ellis. After years of campaigning by her family, and with help from the law firm Mishcon de Reya, the last woman to be hanged in Britain received a posthumous conditional pardon in July — 71 years after her death.

Ellis's story, which was a catalyst for the abolition of the death penalty in Britain in 1965, is one that most people think they are familiar with, but the details of her short and difficult life, which Treger portrays in this, her fourth novel, are less well known.

As Ellis languishes in Holloway Prison waiting for her trial, she ponders the events that led to her shooting her lover, the racing car driver David Blakely, on Easter Sunday 1955.

Well researched, using extensive archive material, Treger's dialogue takes readers through the abuse that Ellis and her mother and sister suffered at the hands of her alcoholic father, her relationship with a French-Canadian soldier during the Second World War, which resulted in the birth of her son, Clare Andrea (Andy) Neilson, and her short marriage to the dentist George Ellis, with whom she had a daughter, Georgina.

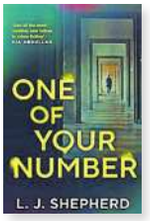
The "fatal love" that Ellis has for the abusive, unfaithful and cruel Blakely is vividly and grippingly portrayed. Ellis's history and medical records show she was a victim of domestic abuse — she lost a pregnancy after Blakely kicked her in the stomach. The elements that could have given Ellis the basis for a partial defence of diminished responsibility are all there — had her trial been heard after this defence was introduced in the Homicide Act 1957, she would have escaped the death penalty.

Less successful are the chapters in which her solicitor, John Bickford, attempts to build his client's defence.

Although the book focuses on Ellis, greater emphasis could have been given to Bickford, who appears to have sat on evidence about the role played by Ellis's jealous lover, Desmond Cussen — and to the heroic efforts of her probate and divorce solicitor, Victor Mishcon, who sought to get a last-minute reprieve for Ellis after she told him that it was Cussen who had given her the gun, taught her to shoot and driven her to the scene.

One of the most intriguing parts of the book is the two-page "afterword" in which the author runs through the fate of Ellis's family after her death.

Catherine Baksi is a non-practising barrister and freelance journalist



One of Your Number by LJ Shepherd
Pushkin Press £14.99

British and Irish lawyers have built reputations over the years of writing good thrillers and crime novels, and LJ Shepherd is no exeption.

Her first novel, *The Trials of Lila Dalton*, a Kafkaesque tale of a youngish woman barrister defending a terrorist in something resembling a British court, was well received. Now, she has turned to the subject of a nurse called Michael Quinn who is on trial for the murder of four patients.

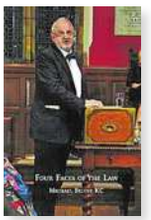
It is hard to imagine a more unsuitable juror than Shepherd's self-opinionated, Leonie. The widow of the much-mourned Hamish, she has finagled her way on to the jury with the intention of convicting Quinn — not surprising as Hamish was one of Quinn's victims.

The jury's not been out an hour when an usher, Susan, bursts in to say there has been a chemical attack on the city and they must stay where they are deliberating. The army is in control of the streets and those venturing on the contaminated pavements will be shot on sight. She will bring reports.

When she does not, the jurors go to retrieve their mobile phones and search the building. It is empty. Judges, police, witnesses have fled. There is no one left. No one that is except Quinn, a single guard and Susan, who is found hanging. Quinn has escaped. They now turn their attention to whether the mild-mannered nurse is Susan's killer and they are next in line.

This change of direction and the subsequent denouement derail the book. Shepherd, is good at the cliques, alignments and realignments and the personal worries of members of the jury as one day's hearing follows the next, and Leonie analyses what she must do to promote the favourable evidence and rubbish the exculpatory bits. Indeed if this had been the whole of the book in the style of *12 Angry Men* it would have been much less unbelievable.

James Morton is an author and a former criminal law solicitor



Four Faces of the Law by Michael Beloff KC
Hart £90

Judges face threats to their independence: political attacks endanger their impartiality and "demystification of the judiciary... is a by-product of our age". As for legal aid barristers in criminal and family law, they "suffer, if not death, at least damage by a thousand cuts".

Michael Beloff KC's observations in his latest book are strangely apposite — despite hailing from two or three decades ago. He has put together a collection of writings, articles and speeches, curated from an extensive output over a long legal career in what makes a kind of retrospective.

Retrospectives can be revealing and relevant. Beloff's views on advocacy, the cab-rank rule or the independence of the judiciary are not time-sensitive. Historical accounts clearly are, such as "the law and judiciary" in Blair's Britain and "the irresistible rise of women in wigs", how sports law has developed or the Supreme Court came into being. But they have the fascination of being contemporary analyses, unamended by hindsight.

Beloff's "four faces" are advocacy, judges, history and sport — where, as Lord Pannick KC writes in the foreword, the author can best demonstrate his knowledge and expertise. Mostly serious stuff — but there are moments of levity, as when Beloff appeared for the actress Gillian Taylforth in her 1994 case against The Sun after the tabloid had accused her of a sexual act with her boyfriend in a slip road off the A1 and a reconstruction took place to see if the act was possible in a Range Rover.

Beloff documents tensions at that time between judges and ministers over the constitutional shake-up, which "survived Lord Woolf's public description of Lord Falconer, then lord chancellor, as a 'cheerful chappie'". Judges, he says, had become "more public and therefore publicised" and risked a loss of authority. He adds with foreboding: "looming on the horizon is the insidious phenomenon of televised courts", with dire warnings that judges will be tempted to play to the gallery.

The reader can discern how times have changed: judges, over 20 years, have shown more restraint and face fewer accusations of "overreaching themselves" or calls for political input into appointments. But Beloff gives no coda or codas on those changes, unlike a true retrospective.

Still, there is revelation and relevance enough, because, as Beloff argues, "the essential structure of our legal system and the values it protects are permanent".

Frances Gibb is the former legal editor at The Times

For our full round-up of summer legal reads, including Sue Black's latest book, *An Expert Witness*, go to thetimes.com

Most of these books can be ordered at timesbookshop.co.uk

THE TIMES
THE BRIEF

Historical case of the month
The bigamist and a forensic blunder that cleared him of murder
thetimes.com

Joy as Burnham backs jury trials

Jonathan Ames

KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; SIMON BRADFIELD/GETTY IMAGES; CHRISTOPHER L PROCTOR FOR THE TIMES

The prime minister wants to ditch proposed reforms that had been defended by Sarah Sackman KC, the courts minister

Fans of bear-baiting will be looking forward to the first reappearance of Sarah Sackman KC in the Commons when parliament returns from its summer break.

Sackman, unlike her one-time boss the former justice secretary David Lammy, has kept her job in government after the Burnham purge of the Starmerites. The problem for the courts minister is that while Lammy was meant to be the cheerleader-in-chief for the government's proposed radical reform of the jury trials in England and Wales — designed to rein in a rocketing backlog of cases in the crown courts — Sackman did all the heavy lifting in Westminster.

That involved routinely standing at the dispatch box to bat away suggestions from the opposition — and increasingly from her own Labour benches — that the reforms amounted to a butchering of constitutional rights.

To her credit, Sackman made a good fist of defending an unloved proposal. Whereas Lammy was always vulnerable to claims that he was not a true believer — based on glowing comments about the value of juries in his 2017 review on criminal justice — Sackman battled in favour of the controversial plans as though she had guzzled down the Kool-Aid.

Now she is likely to be consuming a large portion of humble pie — and cooking that dish is the new prime minister. Andy Burnham told a gathering in Sheffield last week that his "instincts" were "that we need to find ways of not reducing access to jury trial". Front bench opposition justice and home affairs spokespeople will be licking their lips.

Up until the arrival of the King of the North in Downing Street ministers were at least publicly right behind the reforms. And it was not just ministers but figures such as Sir Brian Leveson, a retired Court of Appeal judge whose report last year to the government was routinely wheeled out in justification of the move. A former Conservative lord chancellor, Alex Chalk, had proposed something similar — as indeed had last year's report from this newspaper's own crime and justice commission.

As to where it has gone wrong for the proposals, the simple answer might be overreach on the part of Lammy and Sackman. Leveson, Chalk and The Times's commission had all more or less called for the creation of an intermediate level of the crown court that would hear cases involving less serious offences with a judge and two lay magistrates on the bench. But the government went a couple of steps further — increasing the severity of the offences that could be tried without a jury and ditching any lay involvement by having the court overseen by a judge sitting alone on what was to be known as the crown court bench division.

Whether the government went that extra mile in the knowledge that an already depleted magistracy would not have the numbers to fill slots on a bench division is unknown — they remained silent on that point. More importantly, other factors didn't add up for the plan.

Opponents repeatedly pointed out to ministers that while there were many causes of the growing case backlog, the empanelment of juries and their deliberations was not one of them. Indeed, when ministers lifted the cap on judicial sitting days in the courts, backlogs in key areas across the country began to fall. Allow the courts to sit at full capacity and sort out listing issues, experienced lawyers said, and the backlog will fall.

A less publicised issue with the government's proposal was the suggestion — highly touted by Leveson — that ditching juries would mean those cases heard by a judge alone would be concluded 20 per cent faster. The government routinely cited Leveson for this figure, while the retired judge in turn would say that government researchers produced it.

Regardless of the origins of the 20 per cent figure, lawyers pointed out that even if it were valid, proponents of the reform were overlooking a crucial factor. Included in their plans was a requirement of bench division judges to write judgments explaining why they had convicted or acquitted defendants.

Crown court judges are not used to writing rulings — and critics pointed out that the time it would take them to do so would easily devour the 20 per cent saving, if not take longer.

Law chiefs greeted Burnham's comments last week with restrained joy. Riel Karmy-Jones KC, chair of the Criminal Bar Association, was confident that the "jury trial is here to stay", adding that Burnham had given a "clear indication that this government understands that the right to jury trial goes hand in hand with our PM's statement that 'the care of people' is at the heart of his new administration."

Mark Evans, president of the Law Society, the solicitors' body, said that "any efforts to reduce court backlogs must not come at the expense of fundamental safeguards. Jury trials must be protected to ensure public confidence in our justice system."

But at least one senior figure was pressing for Burnham not to backtrack. Leveson told The Times he remained "of the firm view" that "structural reform" of the jury system was needed.

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Lawyer of the week Jo Keddie

Jo Keddie, the head of employment at the law firm Forsters, acted for a Goldman Sachs executive who was awarded nearly £1.5 million by an employment tribunal. It ruled earlier that Jonathan Reeves was unfairly dismissed from his job at the investment bank after suffering sex discrimination while on parental leave after the birth of his child.

What were the biggest hurdles you had to overcome in this case? Obtaining compelling evidence to support the "stigma" damages claim for reputational harm and career disruption caused by the litigation. The challenge was building the evidential picture to demonstrate the link. The tribunal accepted that despite winning, the claimant's job prospects had been severely affected. Another challenge was quantifying the loss in terms of future impact on career prospects and earnings.

What is the best decision you have taken as a lawyer? To take a curious and courageous approach, and explore novel, interesting areas of the law.

Whom do you most admire in the law? Baroness Hale, the former president of the Supreme Court. Her influence remains enormous. Her leadership in constitutional and equality law, including the Gina Miller prorogation case, made her one of the most respected judges of modern times.

What is the funniest thing that has happened in your job? When a judge presiding over a remote hearing during Covid had to compete with his chorus of chickens, demanding their daily corn in ever increasing decibels. I struggled to keep a straight face.

What are the best and worst elements of being a lawyer? The best are making a difference, especially in difficult but deserving cases where the odds are against us — I describe it as "pushing water uphill". The worst are delays in the tribunals system that make securing access to justice ever more challenging.

What law would you enact? Reforms to the tribunals system, which is in urgent need of financial investment and priority attention.

What is your favourite drink? A glass of fizz. I reach for it on the good days to celebrate with the team and on the bad to remind myself not to take life too seriously.

Frances Gibb

OUT OF COURT

The cases, the chatter, the chaos: what's really going on in the law

End of hourly billing, really?

For at least the past 30 years soothsayers in the UK legal profession have been predicting the end of hourly billing. Clients would prefer fixed rates, and lawyers despise being slaves to timesheets and the notorious six-minute unit.

Still, billing by time has persisted — and only last year Times Law reported that some City partners were charging £2,000 an hour. But fear not — yet another round of prognostications are being made that the end of the system is nigh. This time from Helix Law, a litigation firm in Brighton that says it specialises in the use of technology "to deliver faster, lower-cost legal services".

Helix reported last week that it had seen a "steep rise in turnover from alternative funding arrangements in 2025-26, which now comprise 69 per cent of the firm's income, while hourly rate income fell to a minority". Readers are invited to revisit this column in ten years' time to see a similar tale.

Swearing-in outfit

Concern was spreading in Westminster that a constitutional crisis was brewing. There were fears that since Alex Norris, the non-lawyer who has replaced David Lammy as justice secretary, would not be sworn in wearing full-bottom wig and the ancient outfit until October, he would not be officially able to conduct the lord chancellor's duties.

Rest assured, though, the Ministry of Justice confirmed that the tenth justice secretary in as many years had been officially sworn in before the Privy Council on July 21. Sadly it confirmed that the formal event, conducted by the lady chief justice at the start of the legal new year in October, is just for show — although it does give the latest lord chancellor a chance to make a speech... as well as boosting the bottom line of Ede & Ravenscroft, the tailor in Chancery Lane that provides the full-bottom wigs, gowns and potpourri that combine to make the lord chancellor's ceremonial garb.

Poached eggheads

Some in the legal profession are obsessed with which partners are defecting to which firms, so as holiday season dawns, a useful round-up on the numbers has come from Macrae, a headhunting consultancy. New York had a record-breaking first six months of the year for top-tier lateral moves — as partner defections are euphemistically described — logging 358. While London returned broadly to 2024 levels, with 240 partners being poached.

■ **Times Law is taking a short summer break and will return on September 3**

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS
OF ENGLAND AND WALES
COMPANIES COURT (ChD)

CR-2026-005429

IN THE MATTER OF ROTORK PLC
and
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, by an order dated 4 August 2026 made in the above matters, the High Court of Justice in England and Wales (the "**Court**") has given permission for a meeting (the "**Ordinary Share Court Meeting**") to be convened of the holders of Ordinary Scheme Shares as at the Ordinary Share Voting Record Time (each as defined in the Ordinary Share Scheme (defined below)) for the purpose of considering and, if thought fit, approving (with or without modification) a scheme of arrangement proposed to be made pursuant to Part 26 of the Companies Act 2006 (the "**Companies Act**") between Rotork plc (the "**Company**") and the holders of Ordinary Scheme Shares (the "**Ordinary Share Scheme**"), and that such Ordinary Share Court Meeting will be held at the offices of Rothschild & Co at New Court, St Swithin's Lane, London EC4N 8AL, United Kingdom on 3 September 2026 at 10.15 a.m. (London time), at which time and place all holders of Ordinary Scheme Shares are requested to attend.

Any Ordinary Scheme Shareholder (as defined in the Ordinary Share Scheme) wishing to vote at the Ordinary Share Court Meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy by following the instructions set out in the document of which the Ordinary Share Scheme forms part, dated 6 August 2026 and addressed to the shareholders of the Company (the "**Scheme Document**").

At the Ordinary Share Court Meeting, voting will be by poll and each Ordinary Scheme Shareholder present in person or by proxy will be entitled to one vote for each Ordinary Scheme Share held as at the Ordinary Share Voting Record Time. The approval required at the Ordinary Share Court Meeting is a majority in number of the Ordinary Scheme Shareholders who are present and vote, whether in person or by proxy, at the Ordinary Share Court Meeting and who represent 75 per cent. or more in value of the Ordinary Scheme Shares voted by those Ordinary Scheme Shareholders.

It is important that, for the Ordinary Share Court Meeting, as many votes as possible are cast so that the Court may be satisfied that there is a fair and reasonable representation of opinion of the Ordinary Scheme Shareholders. Whether or not you intend to attend and/or vote at the Ordinary Share Court Meeting, you are therefore strongly advised to appoint a proxy in the manner described in the Scheme Document. Doing so will not prevent you from attending, speaking and voting at the Ordinary Share Court Meeting or any adjournment or postponement thereof, if you so wish and are so entitled.

Any Ordinary Scheme Shareholder who has not received a BLUE form of proxy should request one from the Company's registrars, Equiniti Limited, by calling the shareholder helpline between 8.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. (London time) Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays in England and Wales) on +44 (0) 371 384 2269, or by submitting a request in writing to Equiniti Limited, Highdown House, Yeoman Way, Worthing, West Sussex, BN99 6DA.

A copy of the Scheme Document, containing, among other things, the Ordinary Share Scheme and the explanatory statement required to be published pursuant to section 897 of the Companies Act, is available from the Company's website at https://www.rotork.com/en/investors. An Ordinary Scheme Shareholder who wishes to receive a hard copy of the Scheme Document may request one from the Company's registrars, Equiniti Limited, by calling the shareholder helpline between 8.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. (London time) Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays in England and Wales) on +44 (0) 371 384 2269, or by submitting a request in writing to Equiniti Limited, Highdown House, Yeoman Way, Worthing, West Sussex, BN99 6DA, with an address to which the hard copy may be sent.

Dated: 6 August 2026

Slaughter and May
One Bunhill Row
London EC1Y 8YY
Solicitors for the Company

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
BUSINESS AND PROPERTY COURTS
OF ENGLAND AND WALES
COMPANIES COURT (ChD)

CR-2026-005429

IN THE MATTER OF ROTORK PLC
and
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2006

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, by an order dated 4 August 2026 made in the above matters, the High Court of Justice in England and Wales (the "**Court**") has given permission for a meeting (the "**Preference Share Court Meeting**") to be convened of the holders of Preference Scheme Shares as at the Preference Share Voting Record Time (each as defined in the Preference Share Scheme (defined below)) for the purpose of considering and, if thought fit, approving (with or without modification) a scheme of arrangement proposed to be made pursuant to Part 26 of the Companies Act 2006 (the "**Companies Act**") between Rotork plc (the "**Company**") and the holders of Preference Scheme Shares (the "**Preference Share Scheme**"), and that such Preference Share Court Meeting will be held at the offices of Rothschild & Co at New Court, St Swithin's Lane, London EC4N 8AL, United Kingdom on 3 September 2026 at 10.45 a.m. (London time), at which time and place all holders of Preference Scheme Shares are requested to attend.

Any Preference Scheme Shareholder (as defined in the Preference Share Scheme) wishing to vote at the Preference Share Court Meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy by following the instructions set out in the document of which the Preference Share Scheme forms part, dated 6 August 2026 and addressed to the shareholders of the Company (the "**Scheme Document**").

At the Preference Share Court Meeting, voting will be by poll and each Preference Scheme Shareholder present in person or by proxy will be entitled to one vote for each Preference Scheme Share held as at the Preference Share Voting Record Time. The approval required at the Preference Share Court Meeting is a majority in number of the Preference Scheme Shareholders who are present and vote, whether in person or by proxy, at the Preference Share Court Meeting and who represent 75 per cent. or more in value of the Preference Scheme Shares voted by those Preference Scheme Shareholders.

It is important that, for the Preference Share Court Meeting, as many votes as possible are cast so that the Court may be satisfied that there is a fair and reasonable representation of opinion of the Preference Scheme Shareholders. Whether or not you intend to attend and/or vote at the Preference Share Court Meeting, you are therefore strongly advised to appoint a proxy in the manner described in the Scheme Document. Doing so will not prevent you from attending, speaking and voting at the Preference Share Court Meeting or any adjournment or postponement thereof, if you so wish and are so entitled.

Any Preference Scheme Shareholder who has not received a GREEN form of proxy should request one from the Company's registrars, Equiniti Limited, by calling the shareholder helpline between 8.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. (London time) Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays in England and Wales) on +44 (0) 371 384 2269, or by submitting a request in writing to Equiniti Limited, Highdown House, Yeoman Way, Worthing, West Sussex, BN99 6DA.

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Dated: 6 August 2026

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Mon 15 **Falmouth, Jamaica**

Tue 16 **George Town, Cayman Islands**
★RECOMMENDED INCLUDED EXCURSION×: Reef Snorkel & Stingray Sandbar

Thu 18 **Miami, Florida, USA**
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Fri 19 **Arrive in London**

Dates not mentioned will be spent relaxing at sea

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Deluxe Veranda Suite	G2	**£6,139**
Serenity Suite	F2	**£6,999**
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Concierge Suite	D	**£7,859**

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Today Dry for most with sunny spells, a few showers in northern and western areas. Max 24C (75F), min 7C (45F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	21	PC	3.2	0.0
Aberporth	17	PC	0.0	1.9
Anglesey	19	C	0.0	5.5
Aviemore	17	D	12.0	0.3
Barnstaple	19	PC	0.6	**
Bedford	23	PC	0.0	**
Belfast	16	R	1.0	4.0
Birmingham	22	PC	0.0	**
Bournemouth	23	PC	0.0	7.5
Bridlington	22	PC	2.6	**
Bristol	20	PC	6.4	2.2
Camborne	18	C	0.2	3.5
Cardiff	19	PC	0.8	2.9
Edinburgh	17	D	0.6	1.0
Eskdalemuir	14	R	3.2	0.0
Glasgow	16	C	2.0	2.6
Hereford	21	C	1.0	**
Herstmonceux	24	PC	0.0	7.3
Ipswich	23	PC	0.0	8.3
Isle of Man	18	PC	0.4	3.3
Isle of Wight	23	C	0.0	**
Jersey	21	S	0.6	5.8
Keswick	15	R	3.0	**
Kinloss	20	**	1.0	0.0
Leeds	17	C	0.8	**
Lerwick	12	C	11.8	0.0
Leuchars	19	R	3.6	0.6
Lincoln	22	PC	0.0	4.3
Liverpool	17	C	2.6	**
London	25	PC	0.0	7.6
Lyneham	20	PC	0.0	4.9
Manchester	21	C	2.6	1.4
Margate	26	PC	0.2	12.5
Milford Haven	19	C	0.0	**
Newcastle	17	R	1.2	**
Nottingham	21	C	0.0	4.2
Orkney	14	D	11.6	**
Oxford	24	C	0.0	**
Plymouth	21	PC	0.0	**
Portland	21	PC	0.0	**
Scilly, St Mary's	21	PC	0.4	**
Shoreham	**	**	0.0	7.3
Shrewsbury	19	PC	0.0	1.9
Snowdonia	14	C	4.2	**
Southend	24	C	0.0	10.7
South Uist	12	R	4.8	**
Stornoway	13	R	16.4	0.0
Tiree	13	R	9.2	0.0
Whitehaven	15	R	3.2	1.8
Wick	**	C	2.6	**
Yeovilton	20	PC	0.6	4.7

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	32	PC	Madeira	27	PC
Amsterdam	25	PC	Madrid	32	S
Athens	34	S	Malaga	28	S
Auckland	**	**	Mallorca	33	PC
Bahrain	38	PC	Malta	32	S
Bangkok	32	PC	Melbourne	14	B
Barbados	31	B	Mexico City	25	PC
Barcelona	33	S	Miami	32	**
Beijing	**	**	Milan	35	S
Beirut	**	**	Mombasa	29	B
Belgrade	36	S	Montreal	26	PC
Berlin	29	S	Moscow	26	S
Bermuda	30	PC	Mumbai	27	M
Bordeaux	27	C	Munich	32	S
Brussels	25	PC	Nairobi	24	PC
Bucharest	34	S	Naples	34	S
Budapest	38	S	New Orleans	32	PC
Buenos Aires	**	**	New York	28	B
Cairo	32	S	Nice	31	S
Calcutta	30	**	Nicosia	34	PC
Canberra	12	PC	Oslo	14	R
Cape Town	16	B	Paris	27	S
Chicago	29	PC	Perth	19	PC
Copenhagen	23	PC	Prague	33	S
Corfu	34	PC	Reykjavik	13	B
Delhi	31	**	Riga	26	S
Dubai	45	S	Rio de Janeiro	25	PC
Dublin	17	SH	Riyadh	45	S
Faro	25	S	Rome	34	S
Florence	36	S	San Francisco	22	PC
Frankfurt	32	S	Santiago	15	B
Geneva	29	PC	São Paulo	25	S
Gibraltar	28	S	Seoul	34	S
Helsinki	21	PC	Seychelles	29	PC
Hong Kong	31	PC	Singapore	32	B
Honolulu	**	**	St Petersburg	24	B
Istanbul	32	S	Stockholm	21	S
Jerusalem	33	S	Sydney	16	S
Johannesburg	17	S	Tel Aviv	33	S
Kuala Lumpur	32	PC	Tenerife	33	S
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	29	PC
Lanzarote	34	S	Vancouver	19	C
Las Palmas	33	PC	Venice	**	**
Lima	22	DU	Vienna	38	S
Lisbon	28	PC	Warsaw	34	S
Los Angeles	25	PC	Washington	29	PC
Luxor	38	S	Zurich	**	**

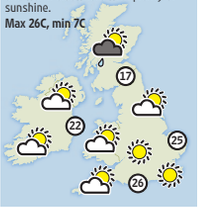
Five days ahead

Mostly dry and sunny in England and Wales, cloudy with patchy rain in Ireland and Scotland

Tomorrow

Patchy cloud and one or two spots of rain in northern Scotland. Dry and warm elsewhere with plenty of sunshine.

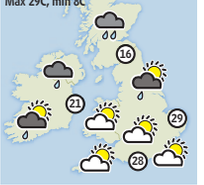
Max 26C, min 7C



Saturday

Staying dry with sunny periods across southern England and Wales. Thick cloud and spells of rain and showers elsewhere.

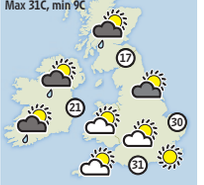
Max 29C, min 8C



Sunday

Bright intervals and showery outbreaks of rain across Ireland and Scotland. Dry with sunny periods in England and Wales.

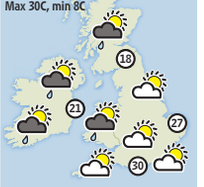
Max 31C, min 9C



Monday

Cloudy with a few spots of rain in Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Largely dry with some sunshine across England.

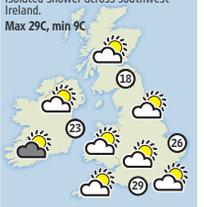
Max 30C, min 8C



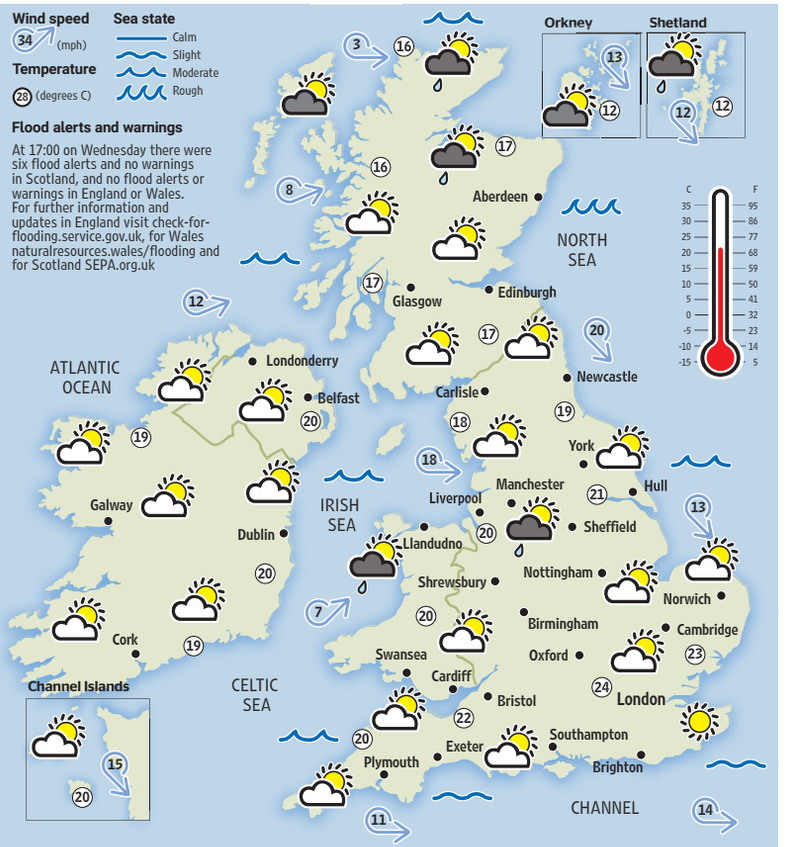
Tuesday

A dry and hot day for most with lots of sunshine and a chance of the odd isolated shower across southwest Ireland.

Max 29C, min 9C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest

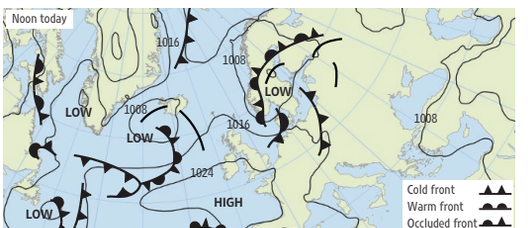


General situation: Cloudy with showers in northern Scotland and northwest England, dry and sunny elsewhere.
Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: A largely dry day with sunny periods and a chance of the odd isolated shower in the northwest through the afternoon. Light to moderate west to southwesterly winds. Maximum 20C (68F), minimum 8C (46F).
NW Scotland, NE Scotland, Aberdeen, Moray Firth, N Isles: Patchy cloud and frequent showers through the morning. Drier with some bright periods by the afternoon. Light to moderate west to northwesterly winds. Maximum 17C (63F), minimum 8C (46F).
Edinburgh and Dundee, Cen Highland, Argyll, Glasgow, SW Scotland, Borders, NE Eng: Mostly dry with a mixture of sunny spells and patchy cloud throughout the day. One or two showers may move into southwest Scotland later. Light to moderate west to northwesterly winds. Maximum 19C (66F), minimum 7C (45F).
Lake District, Cen N Eng, NW Eng, IoM, W Mids, N Wales: Bright intervals and scattered showers in the morning. Mainly dry with sunny spells by the afternoon. Light to moderate west to northwesterly winds. Maximum 20C (68F), minimum 7C (45F).
London, E Anglia, SE Eng, Cen S Eng, E Mids, E Eng, SW Eng, Channel Is, S Wales: A dry and warm day with long spells of sunshine. Light to moderate northwesterly winds. Maximum 24C (75F), minimum 7C (45F).

Tides

Tidal predictions. Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	07:03	3.8	19:54	3.6
Avonmouth	--:--	--	12:55	11.1
Belfast	04:39	3.3	17:23	3.1
Cardiff	--:--	--	12:36	10.4
Devonport	11:29	4.6	23:49	4.7
Dover	04:26	6.0	16:57	6.0
Dublin	05:18	3.8	17:57	3.5
Falmouth	10:47	4.4	23:20	4.4
Greenock	05:49	3.3	18:18	3.1
Harwich	05:32	3.5	17:32	3.6
Holyhead	03:52	5.1	16:27	4.7
Hull	--:--	--	12:06	6.7
Leith	08:19	5.0	21:05	4.7
Liverpool	04:33	8.5	17:04	8.0
London Bridge	07:26	6.2	19:43	6.4
Lowestoft	03:12	2.2	15:15	2.5
Milford Haven	11:58	5.9	--:--	--
Morecambe	04:45	8.4	17:17	7.9
Newhaven	04:33	5.8	17:03	5.9
Newquay	10:54	5.7	23:28	5.7
Oban	11:16	3.1	--:--	--
Penzance	10:24	4.7	22:54	4.7
Portsmouth	05:04	4.1	17:46	4.2
Shoreham	04:36	5.5	17:07	5.5
Southampton	04:12	4.1	16:43	4.1
Swansea	11:58	7.9	--:--	--
Tees	09:24	5.0	22:15	4.6
Weymouth	--:--	--	12:17	1.5



Synoptic situation

An area of high pressure to the southwest of the British Isles will bring a dry and warm day across much of the region with one or two showers across northern Scotland, Wales and northwest England through the morning. The best of the sunshine will be in southeast England by late afternoon, although it may turn a little hazy at times.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Writtle, Essex, 27.0C
Coldest: Cairngorm, 6.3C
Wettest: Fywie, Aberdeenshire, 31.6mm
Sunniest: Manston, Kent, 12.5hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 05.31
Sun sets: 20.39
Moon rises: 23.08
Moon sets: 16.40 Fri
New moon: August 12

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	21:41-04:49
Belfast	21:45-05:15
Birmingham	21:21-05:07
Cardiff	21:22-05:16
Exeter	21:21-05:20
Glasgow	21:44-05:03
Liverpool	21:29-05:08
London	21:10-05:03
Manchester	21:26-05:05
Newcastle	21:29-04:56
Norwich	21:08-04:54
Penzance	21:27-05:30
Sheffield	21:22-05:02

Weather Eye

Paul Simons

Just as a reminder of what summers used to be like, the summer of 1956 was a shocker — cold, wet and windy with hail and outbreaks of thunderstorms. In those days the August bank holiday was on the first Monday of the month. The 1956 bank holiday was on today's date, August 6, and it was horrendous.

A hailstorm of biblical proportions sent a barrage of hailstones and torrential rain crashing down on Tunbridge Wells in Kent. At one point the centre of town was buried under 1ft of ice, but the ice was also swept up by the deluge of rainwater into drifts reaching 4ft high, leaving traffic marooned.

Windows were smashed, awnings on shops torn to shreds and when drains became blocked with the hailstones it set off serious flooding. A couple about to get married at a church that morning had a slight change of plan when lightning struck the church and the organ was flooded, but the wedding still went ahead, minus any organ music.

Houses, shops, garages and basements flooded, and gardens were ruined. Afterwards, bulldozers, workmen and volunteers helped to shift the ice and clear roads, and a total of 100 lorry loads of hailstones were removed. It took four hours before traffic could pass through the town again.

On the same day, thunderstorms hit other parts of the country. Huge downpours struck Arundel Castle in Sussex with 1.78in (45mm) of rainfall in 18 minutes, and 3.1in (80mm) fell at Faversham, Kent; it was also the coldest August bank holiday in London since 1880.

Floods and landslides struck in late August when 75mm of rain fell in the Scottish Borders on August 27. In fact, it was the wettest August in England and Wales since 1912 and the coldest since 1914. August was also wet and cold over most of Europe, as was September.

The following year the curse of the early August bank holiday returned with more thunderstorms, heavy rains and flooding as well as damaging hail and strong winds.

Speak directly to one of our forecasters on 09065 777675

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TIMES Holidays

Sport

Sandown Park
Rob Wright

5.00 What's The Plan
5.38 Catching Dreams (nap)
6.13 First Law
6.48 Interstate
7.23 Ascending Star
7.58 Amused

Going: good to firm
Draw: 5f, low numbers best
Racing TV

5.00 Handicap
(£5,712: 1m 2f) (7 runners)

1 (2) 3-001 **WARNING SIGN** 55 (B,CD) G & J Moore 7-11-3 **D Dunsdon**
2 (6) 30523 **EPICTETUS** 5 (T,D) J Osborne 6-11-1 **Miss M Jordan**
3 (4) 45-46 **ARCADIAN NIGHTS** 152 (D) M Loughnane 8-10-13 **J Loughnane (7)**
4 (3) 333 **IMPIERIOUS** 37 (V) Tom Clover 3-10-10 **H Callan**
5 (7) 43404 **BEACH POINT** 27 (P,CD) W Knight 5-10-8 **J Hills (7)**
6 (5) 260-1 **DRUMSTICK** 94 (H,D) F O'Brien 5-10-6 **Miss B Hampson**
7 (1) -4342 **WHAT'S THE PLAN** 15 (BF) J Fanshawe 3-10-8 **E Cagney**

2-1 Warning Sign, 7-2 Drumstick, 9-2 What's The Plan, 5-1 Impierious, 8-1 Epictetus, 14-1 Arcadian Nights, Beach Point.

Rob Wright's choice: What's The Plan was a close second at Lingfield; he is still unexposed **Danger** Drumstick

5.38 Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,940: 5f) (9)

1 (6) 00 **BEACH NOIR** 9 G & J Moore 9-7 **A Rawlinson**
2 (8) 2 **CATCHING DREAMS** 12 C Appleby 9-7 **C Planas**
3 (9) 00 **CHAMPAGNE CHARLEE** 14 (T) S C Williams 9-7 **M Ghiani**
4 (2) 6 **CRAZEE IN HAVANA** 12 E J-Houghton 9-7 **O Murphy**
5 (1) 600 **KIGALI** 24 Ollie Sangster 9-7 **S D Bowen**
6 (4) 05 **MENHAAL** 64 (BF) Owen Burrows 9-7 **D Probert**
7 (5) **PULSE OF FIRE** E Walker 9-7 **K Shoemark**
8 (3) 20 **ELEVATING** 7 R Hannon 9-2 **S M Levey**
9 (7) 00 **VESPER HONEY** 38 G Baker 9-2 **J Watson**

7-4 Catching Dreams, 3-1 Menhaal, 4-1 Pulse Of Fire, Elevating, 8-1 Crazee In Havana, 33-1 Kigali, 100-1 Champagne Charlee, Vesper Honey, Beach Noir.

Wright choice: Catching Dreams shaped well when a fast-finishing second at Lingfield **Dangers** Menhaal, Elevating

6.13 Stakes (2-Y-O: £7,020: 1m) (4)

1 (2) 65 **CROWN RANGER** 54 M Botti 9-7 **M Ghiani**
2 (3) **FIRST LAW** C Appleby 9-7 **C Planas**
3 (4) **FLIGHT TRACKER** R Beckett 9-7 **C Rodriguez**
4 (1) 0 **SEE THE MOUNTAIN** 37 A Balding 9-7 **O Murphy**

1-2 First Law, 100-30 Flight Tracker, 7-1 Crown Ranger, 16-1 See The Mountain.

Wright choice: First Law cost 1 million guineas (£1.05 million) as a yearling; one to watch **Danger** Flight Tracker

6.48 Handicap
(3-Y-O: £6,019: 1m 2f) (3)

1 (2) 1-503 **ELAN D'OR** 19 S C Williams 9-10 **M Ghiani**
2 (1) 02-2 **INTERSTATE** 14 (P) J & T Gosden 9-5 **L Catton (3)**
3 (3) 2-025 **EDWIN HUBBLE** 12 (B,BF) B Meehan 9-1 **O Murphy**

10-11 Interstate, 9-4 Edwin Hubble, 100-30 Elan D'or.

Wright choice: Interstate was beaten a neck at Doncaster on his first try at this trip; more to come **Danger** Elan D'Or

7.23 Handicap (£6,019: 7f) (6)

1 (4) -0521 **DESERT SHADOW** 22 (V) S bin Suroor 4-10-2 **O Murphy**
2 (2) -0002 **TAVANA** 19 (D) E Smyth-Osbourne 3-9-9 **S M Levey**
3 (1) 2-022 **SUNNY SMILE** 33 (W,P,T) H Palmer 3-9-5 **D Probert**
4 (6) 33-13 **ASCENDING STAR** 34 (BF) Owen Burrows 3-9-5 **C Rodriguez**
5 (5) 00001 **LUNARIO** 26 (T,V,CD) L Dace 6-9-4 **M Ghiani**
6 (3) -2221 **THURSDAY GIRL** 19 E Walker 3-9-1 **K Shoemark**

5-2 Desert Shadow, 3-1 Thursday Girl, 4-1 Ascending Star, 6-1 Lunario, 7-1 Sunny Smile, Tavana.

Wright choice: Ascending Star set an overly strong pace when third here; drops in trip **Danger** Desert Shadow

7.58 Handicap (£4,449: 1m) (6)

1 (3) 50412 **KODI FIRE** 13 (P,T,D) C Hills 4-9-9 **J Watson**
2 (2) 04333 **BUBBLES WONKY** 13 M Pattinson 5-9-8 **K Shoemark**
3 (1) 33100 **H KEY LAILS** 13 (P,D) M Attwater 6-9-8 **J Glennon (7)**
4 (4) 43061 **GREAT BLASKET** 7 (V,CD) James Owen 6-9-7(5ex) **O Murphy**
5 (6) 03-45 **WAR CHANT** 14 (D) Jack Jones 6-9-5 **D Probert**
6 (5) 02002 **AMUSED** 14 J Boyle 4-9-3 **C Rodriguez**

4-5 Great Blasket, 4-1 Kodi Fire, 9-2 Amused, 12-1 Bubbles Wonky, 14-1 War Chant, 20-1 H Key Lails.

Wright choice: Amused was collared late on here last time; still looks fairly weighted **Danger** Great Blasket

Newmarket
Rob Wright

2.20 Stormy Music
2.55 Lord Ragnar
3.30 Kaboom
4.00 Cerro Blanco
4.33 Koala Rose
5.08 Seeking Charles

Going: good to firm
Draw: no advantage
Racing TV

2.20 Handicap (£5,234: 1m) (7)

1 (7) 00365 **DASHING DICK** 19 (P,C) W Stone 8-9-13 **Taryn Langley (3)**
2 (5) 42244 **PANELLI** 14 (T,V,D) S C Williams 4-9-13 **C R Lyons (7)**
3 (3) -3001 **HOME HERO** 8 (V,D) H Palmer 3-9-12(6ex) **T Moore (7)**
4 (1) 20243 **BORN A REBEL** 6 (C,D) P Owens 5-9-9 **A D'Arcy (7)**
5 (2) 06-04 **DECALOGUE** 13 J Osborne 3-9-5 **C Whiteley (3)**
6 (6) -5043 **JUST TYPICAL** 29 (H,T,BF,D) I Williams 5-9-5 **R Kavanagh**
7 (4) 6-063 **STORMY MUSIC** 15 (BF) A Balding 3-9-4 **A Redman (7)**

11-4 Home Hero, 7-2 Stormy Music, 4-1 Born A Rebel, 5-1 Just Typical, 7-1 Panelli, 8-1 Dashing Dick, 16-1 Decalogue.

2.55 Nursery
(2-Y-O: £5,234: 1m) (5)

1 (1) 0212 **LORD RAGNAR** 24 E Dunlop 9-9 **B Loughnane**
2 (2) 00611 **EMERALD BAY** 23 (P) G Scott 9-2 **D Keenan**
3 (4) 566 **HIGH CALIBRE** 23 R Hannon 9-2 **J Leavy**
4 (3) 001 **PEGGY'S LAD** 42 J Jardine 9-2 **M Winn**
5 (5) 055 **WOODHAY WAYFARER** 28 T Ward 9-2 **S Osborne**

13-8 Lord Ragnar, 2-1 Emerald Bay, 9-2 Peggy's Lad, 7-1 High Calibre, 10-1 Woodhay Wayfarer.

3.30 Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,757: 6f) (7)

1 (7) 2 **FAST PERFORMER** 19 W Haggas 9-7 **C Fallon**
2 (6) 6 **HELLO YOU TEN** 19 J Osborne 9-7 **S Osborne**
3 (1) **KABOOM** R Hannon 9-7 **J Leavy**
4 (3) **SCIENZA** A Balding 9-7 **A Redman (7)**
5 (5) **CROWN AND TWO** Tom Clover 9-4 **B Loughnane**
6 (2) **ZEPHYRA** M Botti 9-2 **J Gilligan**
7 (4) **WATER ANGEL** D Cunha 9-1 **S Donohoe**

2-1 Fast Performer, 7-2 Scienza, 4-1 Kaboom, 5-1 Crown And Two, 12-1 Zephyra, Hello You Ten, 14-1 Water Angel.

4.00 Stakes (£5,400: 7f) (4)

1 (1) 12 **CERRO BLANCO** 97 (D) C Appleby 3-9-11 **B Loughnane**
2 (4) 4 **WINSTON'S OATH** 8 James Owen 4-9-10 **M Paetel (5)**
3 (2) 54 **NOTHING BUT LOVE** 31 (H) Dr J Scargill 4-9-5 **G Wood**
4 (3) **TACTICALIST** James Owen 3-8-13 **C Fallon**

1-8 Cerro Blanco, 8-1 Nothing But Love, 14-1 Tacticalist, 66-1 Winston's Oath.

4.33 Handicap (£6,542: 2m) (5)

1 (4) 0-154 **MINHAD** 34 (P,BF) I Mohammed & J Santos 4-10-2 **K S McHugh (7)**
2 (5) 22-46 **PERCY SHELLEY** J19 James Owen 7-10-1 **G Wood**
3 (1) 006/3 **HIGH FIBRE** J19 (V) James Owen 7-9-12 **C Fallon**
4 (2) 30642 **IMPERIAL SOVEREIGN** 26 P Kirby 5-9-9 **B Loughnane**
5 (3) 3-322 **KOALA ROSE** 20 R Beckett 3-8-13 **H Crouch**

9-4 High Fibre, 3-1 Koala Rose, 4-1 Imperial Sovereign, 9-2 Minhad, 5-1 Percy Shelley.

5.08 Handicap (£5,234: 1m 4f) (6)

1 (4) 00231 **EDUCATOR** 9 (B,D) Miss H Knight 7-9-13(4ex) **B Loughnane**
2 (5) 5-242 **KING'S CASTLE** 13 D M Simcock 9-9-8 **Taryn Langley (5)**
3 (3) -6013 **DIDAAR** 19 (P) Gihan Arnolda 5-9-7 **T Moore (7)**
4 (1) 030-3 **SEEKING CHARLES** 52 M Usher 5-9-6 **T Heard**
5 (6) -0025 **REVELIO** 19 Tom Clover 4-9-4 **C Fallon**
6 (2) 54-35 **MAITH MAR OR** 14 J Berry 4-8-13 **D Keenan**

11-8 Educator, 3-1 King's Castle, 9-2 Didaar, 8-1 Seeking Charles, Revelio, 20-1 Maith Mar Or.

Brighton
Rob Wright

2.38 River Wharfe
3.13 Regalism
3.50 Gone Rogue
4.25 Brave Hunter
4.55 Dream Of Ithaca
5.30 Just Jump

Going: good to firm-good in places
Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best
Sky Sports Racing

2.38 Stakes (£4,187: 7f) (8)

1 (1) -0046 **APPLE'S ANGEL** 30 (H) J Boyle 4-9-9 **O Lewis (5)**
2 (8) 01440 **BARNSNAPE BOY** 15 (CD) J Boyle 5-9-9 **D J Murphy (5)**
3 (3) 06105 **PORT HEDLAND** 23 (H,BF,C) A Carroll 5-9-9 **M Slater (5)**
4 (2) 60605 **RIVER WHARFE** 17 (P,CD) A Carroll 8-9-9 **Molly Gunn (5)**
5 (5) 00006 **ROCK MASTER** 15 (P) A Carroll 4-9-9 **Myla Coppins (5)**
6 (7) 52206 **SPIRITED DANCER** 6 (P) D & C Kubler 4-9-9 **W Fentiman**
7 (6) 6-003 **VALADERO** 41 (B,BF) Brian Toomey 5-9-9 **L Wright**
8 (4) 0-004 **VOODOO RAY** 49 (B,CD) G & J Moore 7-9-9 **J Fernandes (7)**

3-1 Valadero, 4-1 River Wharfe, 9-2 Port Hedland, 5-1 Spirited Dancer, 8-1 Barnsnape Boy, 10-1 Apple's Angel, Voodoo Ray, 12-1 Rock Master.

3.13 Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,400: 7f) (5)

1 (3) 0 **DEMONSTRATE** 9 Oliver Cole 9-7 **Kaiya Fraser**
2 (5) 56 **FOSCARINI** 36 E J-Houghton 9-7 **C Bishop**
3 (1) 5 **REGALISM** 19 W Haggas 9-7 **H Burns (3)**
4 (4) **CINQ COINS** R Teal 9-4 **W Carson**
5 (2) 63 **THE MONKEY KING** 19 R Beckett 9-4 **R Clutterbuck**

5-4 The Monkey King, 2-1 Regalism, 9-2 Foscarini, 8-1 Cinq Coins, 25-1 Demonstrate.

3.50 Handicap (£4,187: 1m) (6)

1 (2) 42-66 **DANDY G BOY** 23 (P) W Greatrex 4-9-9 **C Bishop**
2 (4) 02543 **BOUBYAN** 14 (P,D) M Appleby 4-9-8 **Kaiya Fraser**
3 (3) 25614 **GONE ROGUE** 14 (P,CD) G & J Moore 5-9-8 **T P Queally**
4 (6) 43323 **DANEHILL STAR** 17 (P,D) A Carroll 5-9-5 **W Carson**
5 (5) 22462 **KONDRATIEV WAVE** 17 (P,CD) A Carroll 9-9-0 **J Doughty**
6 (1) 14030 **WINEMAKER** 31 (H) R Hughes 6-8-13 **F Marsh**

11-4 Kondratiev Wave, 7-2 Gone Rogue, 4-1 Danehill Star, Boubyan, 7-1 Winemaker, 8-1 Dandy G Boy.

4.25 Handicap (£10,468: 1m 4f) (6)

1 (6) 152-1 **NIBRAS GOLD** 26 (P,T,D) James Owen 8-10-1 **P Dobbs**
2 (3) /4020 **MAASAI MARA** 55 (B) J G O'Shea 6-10-0 **W Carson**
3 (1) 41121 **SARANGPUR** 14 (CD) R Hughes 4-9-13 **F Marsh**
4 (5) 62025 **BRAVE HUNTER** 28 (V) I Mohammed & J Santos 3-9-9 **B Sayette**
5 (4) 44011 **BOHEMIAN BREEZE** 37 (P,C,D) G & J Moore 6-9-3 **W Fentiman (3)**
6 (2) 40623 **TAI HANG PEGASUS** 19 C Fellowes 3-9-1 **P Bradley**

2-1 Sarangpur, 3-1 Bohemian Breeze, 7-2 Nibras Gold, 5-1 Brave Hunter, 12-1 Tai Hang Pegasus, Maasai Mara.

4.55 Stakes (£4,187: 1m 4f) (6)

1 (2) 00504 **ALEX THE GREAT** 12 (B,T) A Carroll 6-9-9 **Myla Coppins (5)**
2 (1) 00265 **DOGGED** 12 (B) A Carroll 9-9-9 **W Carson**
3 (5) -0003 **FOINIX** 45 (B,CD) J & S Best 6-9-9 **F Marsh**
4 (3) 50146 **GEARING'S POINT** 2 (P,CD) Miss S West 8-9-9 **G Bass**
5 (6) -4550 **DREAM OF ITHACA** 59 J Gallagher 3-8-13 **L Wright (5)**
6 (4) -6506 **LADY LAUREN** 40 E De Giles 3-8-13 **O Lewis (5)**

13-8 Gearing's Point, 5-2 Foinix, 5-1 Dream Of Ithaca, Dogged, 12-1 Alex The Great, 16-1 Lady Lauren.

5.30 Handicap (£5,234: 7f) (7)

1 (7) 43061 **SILVER TRUMPET** 28 (P,D) E J-Houghton 5-9-9 **C Bishop**
2 (2) 00602 **NORTH VIEW** 14 (V,D) S C Williams 5-9-9 **Olivia Haines (7)**
3 (3) 31130 **DION BAKER** 6 (P,CD) M Wigham 7-9-7 **W Carson**
4 (6) 05621 **SERENITY DREAM** 21 (P,D) A Carroll 5-9-4 **J Doughty**
5 (5) 04606 **DONTSPOILASALE** 17 J & S Best 6-9-2 **F Marsh**
6 (4) 03452 **STATE OF MADNESS** 45 (C) M Loughnane 5-9-2 **P Bradley**
7 (1) 0R153 **JUST JUMP** 2 A Carroll 4-8-10 **Myla Coppins (5)**

3-1 Silver Trumpet, 7-2 Serenity Dream, 9-2 North View, 5-1 Just Jump, 6-1 State Of Madness, Dion Baker, 25-1 Dontspoilasale.

Southwell
Rob Wright

5.04 Miss Mambo
5.34 Here Comes Louie
6.06 Hauteluce
6.41 Baarberini (nb)
7.16 Miraculous
7.51 Spirit Of Jenny
8.26 Cloth Of Gold
9.00 Luan

Going: standard
Draw: no advantage
Sky Sports Racing

5.04 Handicap
(Div I: 3-Y-O: £3,664: 1m) (10)

1 (6) 00456 **SINGARDA** 19 (P,T) T Coyle & K Wood 9-9 **D Nolan**
2 (9) 060 **LADY FIZZ** 141 Mohammed & J Santos 9-9 **Dominique Van Der Kraats (7)**
3 (4) 03606 **MISS MAMBO** 39 (B) G Kelleway 9-7 **J Callan**
4 (2) -0241 **DISTILLATION** 16 M Usher 9-7 **R Havlin**
5 (10) 23030 **ATHENIAN SPIRIT** 16 G Nicholls 9-5 **P-L Jamin**
6 (7) 1-000 **HEAR THE DRUMS** 51 R & P Fahey 9-5 **Oisin Orr**
7 (3) 33500 **SODA** 28 G Tutty 9-4 **C Beasley**
8 (5) 5-043 **MIST OF TIME** 30 W Knight 9-1 **L Morris**
9 (1) 00600 **GO TEEJAY** 12 (P) Craig Lidster 9-0 **A Jary (3)**
10 (8) 006 **RETRO ROCKET** 33 M Keighley 9-0 **H Vigors (5)**

2-1 Distillation, 4-1 Mist Of Time, 6-1 Athenian Spirit, Singarda, 10-1 Lady Fizz, Hear The Drums, 14-1 Miss Mambo, 20-1 Soda, Retro Rocket, 25-1 Go Teejay.

5.34 Handicap (Div II: 3-Y-O: £3,664: 1m) (9)

1 (2) 5-00 **GILLEANGIRL** 121 (T) I Furtado 9-9 **S De Sousa**
2 (9) 50103 **STARAKOVA** 31 W Greatrex 9-8 **H Vigors (5)**
3 (7) 12063 **ELASHGAR** 21 K Frost 9-7 **W Pyle**
4 (6) 46045 **ERNIE MCCREW** 16 J S Moore 9-5 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
5 (1) 0-062 **HERE COMES LOUIE** 21 Roger Fell 9-5 **K Stott**
6 (5) 23434 **ALICE'S INFLUENCE** 34 (B,D) P Evans 9-5 **J F Egan**
7 (3) -0523 **GLORIOLA** 30 (BF) Steph Hollinshead 9-3 **C Lee**
8 (4) 0-540 **SPECKLED BROWN** 18 Andi Brown 9-0 **B McHugh**
9 (8) 000-0 **THOMAS TALLIS** 65 J Mackie 9-0 **C Hutchinson**

100-30 Starakova, 7-2 Elashgar, 4-1 Here Comes Louie, 5-1 Gloriola, 13-2 Ernie Mccrew, 10-1 Alice's Influence, 12-1 Gilleangirl, 25-1 others.

6.06 Handicap (£4,711: 1m) (11)

1 (8) 62024 **DREAM ILLUSION** 29 (CD) M Herrington 4-9-13 **J Hart**
2 (6) 10301 **KISS ME MY LOVE** 8 (D) Roger Fell 4-9-11 **Joanna Mason**
3 (1) 402-6 **KARTINI** 20 S Whitaker 4-9-11 **T Eaves**
4 (5) 00133 **RAVISHING BEAUTY** 20 (P,BF,D) J O'Keeffe 5-9-11 **J Garritty**
5 (10) 5-13 **HAUTELUCE** 20 (BF) E Walker 3-9-9 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
6 (7) 32661 **FILLY EILISH** 10 (CD) I Furtado 3-9-9(6ex) **S De Sousa**
7 (3) -1654 **ZARINCA** 20 (C) E Bethell 3-9-7 **C Beasley**
8 (2) 22460 **COURT OF STARS** 20 Ollie Sangster 3-9-6 **L Morris**
9 (11) 5-004 **ZERMATT STAR** 20 T Coyle & K Wood 3-9-6 **D Nolan**
10 (9) 24362 **BLUE CELESTIAL** 16 (BF) J Tate 3-9-1 **C Lee**
11 (4) -5566 **GIFTS DIFFERING** 54 R Burdon 3-8-10 **J Peate**

9-2 Kiss Me My Love, 5-1 Hauteluce, Blue Celestial, Filly Eilish, 6-1 Ravishing Beauty, 13-2 Dream Illusion, 10-1 Zarinca, 20-1 Gifts Differing, Court Of Stars.

6.41 Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,400: 1m) (8)

1 (3) 5 **ASTRAL CROWN** 24 D O'Meara 9-7 **D Tudhope**
2 (5) **KODIAC CITY** R Hughes 9-7 **K Stott**
3 (2) 3 **BAARBERINI** 38 James Horton 9-4 **D Muscutt**
4 (7) 23 **BULLRIDER** 10 G Boughey 9-4 **J Callan**
5 (4) **PHANTOM KNIGHT** A Balding 9-4 **C Hutchinson**
6 (8) 43 **QUEST FOR GLORY** 24 G Nicholls 9-4 **H Vigors (5)**
7 (1) 62 **VINERY** 33 O Greenall & J Guerriero 9-4 **D Nolan**
8 (6) 0 **HOOSTHAT** 59 W Muir & C Grassick 9-1 **J Hart**

5-2 Bullrider, 7-2 Baarberini, 4-1 Vinery, 5-1 Quest For Glory, 8-1 Kodiac City, Phantom Knight, 20-1 Astral Crown, 33-1 Hoosthat.

7.16 Handicap (Div I: £4,711: 6f) (10)

1 (1) 4500J **ZIGGY'S CONDOR** 5 (V,CD) Adam Kirby 5-9-9 **J Doyle**
2 (8) -2520 **CAIRDEAS** 10 P Midgley 4-9-8 **D Nolan**
3 (3) 03500 **MIRACULOUS** 12 (D) T Easterby 4-9-8 **D Allan**
4 (6) 44005 **HECTIC** 55 (P,CD) L Bailey 6-9-6 **J Garritty**
5 (10) 05202 **PICKERSGILL** 10 (C,D) I Jardine 4-9-6 **A Mullen**
6 (4) 23620 **MOOSTAR** 20 (T,V,D) James Owen 4-9-5 **S De Sousa**
7 (9) 34260 **DAYTONA LADY** 31 (P,CD) R Carr 6-9-4 **JP Sullivan**
8 (5) 66134 **COURT DRIVE** 24 (B,BF,D) G Kelleway 5-9-2 **J Callan**
9 (7) 1-065 **OTTAWA** 173 (CD) L Bailey 4-9-2 **D Tudhope**
10 (2) -1640 **SHOWTIME MAHOMES** 163 (CD) G Tuer 7-9-2 **O Stammers**

3-1 Pickersgill, 7-2 Ziggy's Condor, 5-1 Court Drive, 13-2 Daytona Lady, 10-1 Hectic, Moostar, Miraculous, 14-1 Ottawa, Cairdeas, 25-1 Showtime Mahomes.

7.51 Handicap (Div II: £4,711: 6f) (9)

1 (7) 20650 **BEATTIE IS BACK** 13 R & P Fahey 7-9-9 **E Tindall (5)**
2 (4) 50120 **DORNEY LAKE** 13 (T,D) L Bailey 5-9-8 **D Tudhope**
3 (5) 0-212 **SPIRIT OF JENNY** 73 (BF,CD) Steph Hollinshead 4-9-7 **D Costello**
4 (1) -3236 **FIERCE** 41 (D) P Midgley 6-9-6 **J Hart**
5 (6) 06-23 **BABA REZA** 31 (D) J Camacho 8-9-6 **C Lee**
6 (3) 53536 **JESSE LUC** 31 (P,T,CD) M Murphy 6-9-5 **L Morris**
7 (2) 51-00 **SARAFINA MSHAIRI** 49 (CD) E Smyth-Osbourne 4-9-3 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
8 (8) 41064 **CAMERA SHY** 93 (T,C,D) M Dods 4-9-2 **D Muscutt**
9 (9) 55340 **FAN MAIL** 14 (P,CD) T Easterby 4-9-2 **D Allan**

11-4 Spirit Of Jenny, 4-1 Baba Reza, 5-1 Beattie Is Back, 13-2 Fierce, 8-1 Jesse Luc, Camera Shy, 10-1 Dorney Lake, 16-1 Sarafina Mshairi, 20-1 Fan Mail.

8.26 Handicap (£15,702: 1m 3f) (13)

1 (9) 4361/ **VIRTUAL ROCK** J741 (D) J Butler 7-9-12 **C Beasley**
2 (3) 21-20 **SPINNING WHEEL** 61 (BF,D) S & E Crisford 4-9-10 **O Orr**
3 (6) 01-54 **EL BURHAN** 90 (T) G Boughey 4-9-7 **J Callan**
4 (11) -1606 **FRENCH DUKE** 13 H Al Jehani (UAE) 5-9-6 **J Doyle**
5 (1) 00/00 **ASTRO KING** 55 D & C Kubler 9-9-5 **E Nader**
6 (10) 00510 **KING'S CODE** 9 (B,C,D) P Evans 6-9-3 **J F Egan**
7 (12) 311-1 **ULTRASOUL** 54 R Varian 4-9-1 **C Y Ho**
8 (2) 1-100 **LET'S DREAM** 27 M Bell 5-8-13 **J Hart**
9 (13) 2101- **PORT OF LONDON** 227 (P) J & T Gosden 4-8-10 **R Havlin**
10 (8) 35211 **SAY WHAT YOU SEE** 55 (P,C) L Bailey 4-8-10 **L Morris**
11 (5) 11204 **JIMMY SPEAKING** 19 (BF,C) C Dwyer 5-8-6 **S De Sousa**
12 (7) -0204 **CLOTH OF GOLD** 20 C Johnston 4-8-5 **A Mullen**
13 (4) 34004 **PER CONTRA** 19 (P) T Easterby 5-8-2 **D Fentiman**

7-2 Ultrasoul, 11-2 Port Of London, 6-1 El Burhan, Say What You See, 10-1 Jimmy Speaking, Spinning Wheel, 12-1 Per Contra, French Duke.

9.00 Handicap (£3,664: 1m 3f) (13)

1 (10) 15010 **SISTERANDBROTHER** 12 (P) Joey Ramsden 8-9-9 **J Hart**
2 (3) 50-02 **JUNKYARD DOG** 33 (V) J Jardine 4-9-9 **A Mullen**
3 (12) 50-00 **TITANIUM** 18 G Tuer 5-9-9 **O Stammers**
4 (1) 1-000 **NORFLONDONFOREVER** 17 Faye Bramley 5-9-7 **T Eaves**
5 (8) 00032 **MEET ME IN MERAKI** 23 (BF) P Evans 5-9-6 **J F Egan**
6 (5) 34436 **GOLSPIE** 12 (P) P Morris 6-9-6 **D Nolan**
7 (4) 41204 **IT'S ONLY FUN** 10 (P,CD) Sara Ender 4-9-6 **J Peate**
8 (7) 0-011 **LUAN** 23 (T) Nick Scholfield 4-9-5 **D Muscutt**
9 (13) 20653 **DINGWALL** 41 T Easterby 5-9-4 **D Allan**
10 (2) 100-0 **BLACKWATERFOOT** 57 Charlie Pike 5-9-4 **P-L Jamin**
11 (11) 03650 **DISTINCTION** 16 (D) J Mackie 8-9-2 **C Beasley**
12 (9) 0-000 **CAVALRY CALL** 12 (P) P Morris 5-9-2 **JP Sullivan**
13 (6) 0-004 **INTO COMBAT** 16 (BF) Sir M Prescott 4-9-1 **L Morris**

5-2 Luan, 6-1 Into Combat, 7-1 Meet Me In Meraki, 8-1 Junkyard Dog, Dingwall, 10-1 Sisterandbrother, 12-1 It's Only Fun, Golspie.

Chepstow
Rob Wright

5.20 Oasis Sunrise
5.55 Rogue Dakota
6.30 Control Room
7.05 Revelance
7.40 Jackabi
8.15 Red Snapper

Going: good to firm
Draw: low numbers best
Sky Sports Racing

5.20 Handicap (£4,187: 1m 4f) (7)

1 (7) 10442 **DOUBLE RED** 12 (P) H Candy 5-10-2 **R Hornby**
2 (5) 01651 **CURRAN** 16 B Millman 5-10-1 **C Tucker (7)**
3 (4) 4440- **POLEMON** J64 (T,V,D) T Vaughan 7-9-13 **W Carver**
4 (6) 11433 **OASIS SUNRISE** 12 (CD) G Harris 4-9-13 **R Dawson**
5 (1) 40114 **ARAVALLI** 14 (CD) J Tickle 3-9-3 **Taylor Fisher**
6 (2) 0-034 **VIRTUE DILIGENCE** 12 A Perrett 3-9-3 **H Davies**
7 (3) 0036 **COSMO BROWN** 56 (H) W Muir & C Grassick 3-9-1 **L Edmunds**

5-4 Curran, 7-2 Double Red, 6-1 Oasis Sunrise, 7-1 Virtue Diligence, 8-1 Aravalli, 16-1 Polemon, 25-1 Cosmo Brown.

5.55 Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,400: 5f) (4)

1 (4) 44344 **CALEF** 11 (BF) D O'Meara 9-2 **R Dawson**
2 (3) 03 **DOWNONMAINSTREET** 13 M Bell 9-2 **D Egan**
3 (1) **MARZAD** B Millman 9-2 **L Edmunds**
4 (2) **ROGUE DAKOTA** A Watson 9-2 **H Davies**

8-11 Downonmainstreet, 9-4 Rogue Dakota, 6-1 Calef, 16-1 Marzad.

6.30 Handicap (£5,339: 5f) (7)

1 (7) -5143 **ROGUE BULLET** 20 (P,BF,D) James Owen 4-10-0 **H Davies**
2 (6) 5-120 **SOLAR EDGE** 31 (CD) C Mason 4-9-13 **G Mangan**
3 (1) 04252 **MOE'S LEGACY** 10 (V,D) R Harris 5-9-11 **D Egan**
4 (4) 00150 **ALKUWARRIOR** 10 (P,D) C Mason 3-9-7 **Rose Dawes (5)**
5 (2) 54332 **OVER SPICED** 12 (P,CD) G Harris 4-9-6 **R Dawson**
6 (3) 52221 **LEVEL UP** 13 (B,CD) P Evans 7-9-3 **Miss A Tucker (7)**
7 (5) 1-232 **CONTROL ROOM** 19 (D) G Harris 3-9-2 **S C Cronin (5)**

3-1 Level Up, 7-2 Over Spiced, 4-1 Moe's Legacy, 9-2 Rogue Bullet, 6-1 Control Room, 10-1 Solar Edge, 16-1 Alkuwarrior.

7.05 Handicap (£5,339: 1m) (7)

1 (3) 00206 **TALIS EVOLVERE** 19 (D) R Hannon 6-10-2 **S C Cronin (5)**
2 (4) -3004 **SERENITY BLUE** 34 (P) James Horton 4-10-1 **L Edmunds**
3 (7) 30-06 **REVELANCE** 26 R Beckett 4-10-1 **E Greatrex**
4 (6) 55610 **NAKAAHA** 28 (H,D) G Harris 4-9-11 **D Egan**
5 (5) 2-001 **AUBURN AVENUE** 13 (C) J & R Flint 5-9-2 **Millie Wonnacott (5)**
6 (1) 44021 **SPIRIT OF THE BAY** 13 (P,CD) J & R Flint 8-9-2 **Taylor Fisher**
7 (2) -3426 **WINDBREAKER** 28 (P,BF) W Haggas 3-9-0 **H Davies**

11-4 Spirit Of The Bay, 3-1 Auburn Avenue, 4-1 Windbreaker, 7-1 Revelance, Talis Evolvere, 8-1 Serenity Blue, 12-1 Nakaaha.

7.40 Handicap (3-Y-O: £4,187: 7f) (7)

1 (2) 2-006 **SYDNEY ROCK** 8 Oliver Cole 9-9 **E Greatrex**
2 (3) 3-321 **CLEMENTINES STAR** 21 (D) & C Kubler 9-8 **W Carver**
3 (5) 4-051 **JACKABI** 40 (T,CD) M Rimell 9-6 **R Hornby**
4 (7) 31335 **ESPONA BAY** 12 (BF,D) S Dixon 9-4 **C Howarth (3)**
5 (3) 42520 **SUP OF RED** 98 A Wintle 9-1 **David Egan**
6 (1) 50303 **GRAND VISTA** 2 (P) W Muir & C Grassick 8-9 **L Edmunds**
7 (6) 03560 **FULLSTOP** 16 (H,T) G Harris 8-8 **R Dawson**

15-8 Clementines Star, 7-2 Jackabi, 5-1 Espona Bay, 6-1 Grand Vista, 7-1 Sydney Rock, 10-1 Sup Of Red, 20-1 Fullstop.

8.15 Handicap (3-Y-O: £4,187: 6f) (4)

1 (2) 55331 **HALLANDALE BEACH** 40 (T,CD) K P De Foy 9-9 **D Egan**
2 (4) -0404 **PULL THE RUG** 10 (D) G Harris 9-6 **R Dawson**
3 (3) 33265 **EIGHTTHREEONE** 14 (D) E J-Houghton 9-5 **R Hornby**
4 (1) 62001 **RED SNAPPER** 12 (B,D) Kathy Turner 9-3 **C Tucker (7)**

10-11 Hallandale Beach, 11-4 Red Snapper, 11-2 Pull The Rug, 6-1 Eightthreeone.

Results

Cricket

The Hundred: Manchester Super Giants v Welsh Fire: Men

Old Trafford (Welsh Fire won toss): Manchester Super Giants (4pts) beat Welsh Fire by nine wickets

Welsh Fire	(balls)	
*†P Salt c du Plooy b Tongue	48	(37)
M Short c Klaasen b Walter	71	(47)
J Cox c Seifert b Atkinson	11	(6)
R Ravindra not out	14	(5)
T Kohler-Cadmore c Ahmad b Atkinson	0	(2)
M Jansen not out	5	(3)
Extras (lb 3, w 3)	6	
Total (4 wkts, 100 balls)	**155**	

J Root, B Kellaway, C Woakes, L Ferguson and S Cook did not bat.

Fall of wickets 1-125, 2-130, 3-138, 4-138.

Bowling Atkinson 15-8-12-2; Tongue 20-10-17-1; Dawson 20-6-26-0; Ahmad 15-5-34-0; Baker 15-2-38-0; Walter 15-6-25-1.

Manchester Super Giants	(balls)	
T Seifert not out	62	(36)
P Walter c Kellaway b Cook	37	(18)
*†J Buttler not out	51	(20)
Extras (b 4, lb 1, nb 5, w 1)	11	
Total (1 wkt, 69 balls)	**161**	

H Klaasen, L du Plooy, T Moores, L Dawson, G Atkinson, N Ahmad, J Tongue and S Baker did not bat.

Fall of wicket 1-74.

Bowling Woakes 15-3-23-0; Cook 10-3-20-1; Ferguson 14-5-37-0; Jansen 15-2-42-0; Ravindra 10-1-23-0; Short 5-2-11-0.

Women

Old Trafford (Welsh Fire won toss): Welsh Fire (4pts) beat Manchester Super Giants by three wickets

Manchester Super Giants	(balls)	
S S Mandhana run out	15	(17)
*M M Lanning b Prendergast	0	(1)
M K Villiers c Thompson b Prendergast	5	(5)
K E Bryce lbw b Prendergast	4	(2)
P J Schofield st Southby b Graham	5	(7)
M J Brown c Voll b Potts	10	(18)
S Ecclestone st Southby b Graham	9	(14)
†R M Ghosh c Thompson b Prendergast	11	(19)
R L MacDonald-Gay not out	18	(14)
G Ballinger run out	1	(1)
R E A Tyson not out	4	(2)
Extras (lb 1, w 2)	3	
Total (9 wkts, 100 balls)	**85**	

Fall of wickets 1-9, 2-15, 3-19, 4-24, 5-39, 6-46, 7-53, 8-69, 9-71.

Bowling Potts 20-10-25-1; Prendergast 20-12-18-4; Graham 20-10-19-2;

Matthew Syed

MINAS PANAGIOTAKIS/GETTY IMAGES

Raducanu and Draper victims of sports chiefs' greed

A persistent arm injury has completely derailed the career of Draper, who was reduced to tears during his comeback defeat at the Canadian Open this week

It's madness. You don't have to see the pictures of Jack Draper crying in pain at the Montreal Masters on Tuesday or the story of Emma Raducanu withdrawing from the US Open with a stress fracture or Carlos Alcaraz pulling out of Cincinnati Open with a wrist injury having already missed the French Open and Wimbledon — and whose presence at Flushing Meadows is now in serious doubt, depriving the tennis world of the lustre of his rivalry with Jannik Sinner — to grasp this.

Sport was once about excellence, about great moments, about the clash between athletes at the top of their game — and sometimes it still is. But let's be honest: over recent years, with the obsession with "monetising" everything that moves and squeezing ever more furniture into congested calendars, it is now more like a hamster wheel of irrelevant tournaments and meaningless match-ups, leading to more injuries and fewer moments of high drama.

The structure of tennis is nothing less than foolish. Last year the union that Novak Djokovic co-founded, the Professional Tennis Players' Association, made the legitimate point that the ranking system is "draconian" (by putting incessant pressure on players to compete) and that the mandatory requirement to contest ATP and other events, often in extreme heat with matches played into the early hours of the morning, is unsustainable. Organisers, promoters, hangers-on, agents, suits (and, indeed, some of the more short-sighted players) may think this is terrific. Mo' tennis, mo' money.

But they are maddeningly — and ever more conspicuously — wrong. In sport, less is more. Fans want Alcaraz to face Sinner in the slams (not in those horrendous exhibition matches). We want to witness Draper at Wimbledon. This is not possible when they are fed into an almost all-year-round meat grinder; when tennis is no longer a forum showcasing the best of the best but more a factory line churning out matches like so many widgets. I am a tennis nut but would rather watch *Celebrity Love Island* (if such a thing exists) than Draper v Sinner at the Irrelevant Open in Riyadh with eight people watching, everyone bored, including the exhausted, jet-lagged players.

But this isn't only about tennis. Football is producing a form of inflation worthy of the old Weimar Republic. The revamped Champions League last season had 36 teams playing at least eight games each instead of six, with 144 total league-phase games compared with 96 under the old group-stage format. The Championship play-offs have increased from four teams to six, meaning teams finishing third to eighth will now compete for promotion. The 32-team Club World Cup added a 63-match tournament to the end of the 2024-25 season, a month-long bore-fest.

Jürgen Klopp — one of the few people in the game with his head screwed on — called this last competition the "worst idea ever", a statement that I would have heartily agreed with until Gianni Infantino trumped it with a grisly attempt to sell off the World Cup to a vehicle fronted by the brother of Donald Trump's son-in-law. Of course, part of the reported logic was — you guessed it — to increase the frequency of this competition to every two years and who knows, perhaps in time, every year, such that the next World Cup commences before the previous one has finished.

I should note that a recent paper argued that there is nothing to see here. In the Premier League, it claimed, injuries are not statistically increasing. It is the kind of statement that could be made only by someone who knows the price of everything but the value of nothing. I mean, have you not noticed why? In tennis, top players increasingly take their foot off the gas in lower tier events, fearful of another tear or rupture. Ditto in football and, indeed, rugby, where Ben Earl noted that England players covered 25,000 miles to play South Africa in Johannesburg, Fiji in Liverpool and then Argentina in Santiago del Estero — three Tests on three continents in three weekends.

It's insane. But with the suits unlikely to do much about it, it's up to the players. Sure, some may feel they are making money in the short term but they need to take a step back and notice that they are simultaneously destroying their long-term value — and risking the calamity of career-jeopardising injuries of the kind that Draper may now be facing.

I remember a persistent injury in my left hip that almost destroyed my life in sport before it had fully started. Over-competing, in this sense, is not unlike the myopic strategy pursued by unwise newspaper editors, chasing advertising revenue with titillating headlines while destroying the brand. So let me say to any pro sportspeople reading this: take a stand. Don't rely on your agents to do this on your behalf because they won't. One of the great myths of professional sport is that the 15 per cent brigade are a commercially savvy bunch. In my experience, by and large, they are not. So refuse to play. Organise. Do so before it is too late. You are the stars, the players whom fans want to see in peak condition, on the grandest stages, creating the most life-enhancing memories. Refuse the hamster wheel. Reject the factory line. Take yourselves out of the battery farm. You'll enjoy sport so much more. And so will we.

Yesterday's racing results

Brighton

Going: Good to Firm (good in places)

2.30 (5f 215yd) 1, **Cape Toronada** (William Carson, 11-8 fav); 2, Beach Partee (13-2); 3, Havana Jag (100-30). 5 ran. ¾l, 17½l. A W Carroll.

3.00 (7f 216yd) 1, **River Wharfe** (Molly Gunn, 2-1 fav); 2, Rovinia (11-4); 3, Rainbow Sign (11-1). 9 ran. sh, 1½l. A W Carroll.

3.30 (7f 216yd) 1, **Sea Suite** (Cieren Fallon, 3-1); 2, Tex (3-1); 3, Northern Empire (17-2). 9 ran. nk, 1¾l. James Owen.

4.00 (1m 1f 207yd) 1, **Port Darwin** (Rob Hornby, 6-1); 2, It's Life (9-2); 3, Buckland Belle (11-10 fav). 6 ran. sh, 2l. C Johnston.

4.30 (6f 210yd) 1, **Viking Glory** (Cieren Fallon, 5-1); 2, Redredrobin (20-1); 3, The Organiser (13-2). 9 ran. 2¼l, 5l. James Owen.

5.00 (5f 60yd) 1, **Secret Handsheikh** (Cieren Fallon, 11-4); 2, Kento (4-1); 3, Titus Thor (11-2). 6 ran. 37½l, nk. J Gallagher.

Placepot: £94.20

Quadpot: £27.50

Pontefract

Going: Good to Firm (good in places)

2.45 (1m 2f 5yd) 1, **Star Start** (Miss C Parker, 11-4 fav); 2, Sunny Orange (3-1); 3, Quirke On Parole (10-1). 7 ran. ½l, 27½l. Mrs R Carr.

3.15 (6f) 1, **Bugzy** (D Tudhope, 15-2); 2, Lady Henshaw (4-1); 3, Our Son Oscar (5-1). 8 ran. ½l, 1l. Tom Clover.

3.45 (1m 6yd) 1, **Spirit Genie** (Jason Hart, 9-4); 2, Alessia Fernanda (10-1); 3, Garden Oasis (11-10 fav). 6 ran. 27½l, 1l. J Candlish.

4.15 (5f 3yd) 1, **Great** (Shane Gray, 5-2); 2, Spirit Of Applause (11-4); 3, Missmimi (18-1). 9 ran. NR: Sea Her Excel. ¾l, nk. S England.

4.45 (6f) 1, **Alfa Whiteburd** (Jason Hart, 9-4); 2, Aberama Gold (10-1); 3, Mae Amor (11-1). 8 ran. NR: Willolarupi. 17½l. 1l. I Furtado.

5.15 (2m 1f 27yd) 1, **Division Day** (Connor Beasley, 1-2 fav); 2, Anzac Day (9-2); 3, Something (4-1). 4l, 42l. B Ellison.

Placepot: £122.20

Quadpot: £19.70

Jackpot: £2,442.60

Kempton Park

Going: Standard/Slow

5.20 (6f) 1, **Invincible Isaac** (Rossa Ryan, 9-1); 2, Nascent Star (7-2); 3, Kochella (14-1). 10 ran. NR: Secret Rival, Trust Yourself. ¾l, 1l. Lemos Souza.

5.50 (7f) 1, **Off The Peg** (Finley Marsh, 6-5); 2, Chymbulak (3-1); 3, Greenlander (80-1). 8 ran. 5¼l, ns. R Hughes.

6.20 (7f) 1, **Clive The Writer** (S De Sousa, 15-8); 2, Ghost Raider (11-2); 3, Gold Army (14-1). 8 ran. 1l, ½l. W Muir & C Grassick.

6.50 (1m) 1, **Najidi Storm** (Colin Keane, 17-2); 2, Gavriel (5-2); 3, Kaindy (4-1). 13 ran. ½l, 2¼l. Harry Charlton.

7.20 (1m 2f 219yd) 1, **Fortitudine** (James Doyle, 7-2); 2, Dialstone (5-6 fav); 3, Treble Bass (6-1). 12 ran. 2¼l, 1½l. C Appleby.

7.50 (1m 2f 219yd) 1, **Shadow Road** (D Egan, 25-1); 2, Cloud Forest (10-11); 3, Dove Tale (11-1). 10 ran. 5½l, 2l. J Butler.

8.20 (7f) 1, **Victory Ace** (Mikey Sheehy, 4-1 fav); 2, Blakefell (4-1 fav); 3, Angel Gabriel (4-1 fav). 8 ran. sh, 3l. J Butler.

8.50 (1m 7f 218yd) 1, **Captain Robert** (George Wood, 7-2); 2, Desert Belle (5-4 fav); 3, Roland Garros (28-1). 8 ran. 1l, 2¼l. J R Fanshawe.

Placepot:£20.50

Quadpot:£3.60

Yarmouth

Going: Good to Firm

5.40 (6f 3yd) 1, **Luminous Warrior** (Mr Fletcher Yarham, 7-2 fav); 2, So Grateful (7-2 fav); 3, Indy's Angel (4-1). 7 ran. hd, ½l. Dylan Cunha.

6.10 (6f 3yd) 1, **Speed of Sound** (Saffie Osborne, 5-6 fav); 2, Pensando A Te (13-2); 3, Minkaas (7-2). 10 ran. hd, ½l. R Spencer.

6.40 (5f 42yd) 1, **Beauty Box** (H Crouch, 17-2); 2, Dowman (2-1 fav); 3, Dubai Charm (11-4). 5 ran. 1l, hd. J Tate.

7.10 (1m 2f 23yd) 1, **Time Thief** (N Callan, 9-4); 2, Liberate (8-13 fav); 3, Angel Breeze (28-1). 5 ran. ½l, 11l. Tom Clover.

7.40 (1m 6f 17yd) 1, **Urban Warrior** (Marco Ghiani, 9-4); 2, Le Rouge Chinois (9-2); 3, Highland Harvey (6-4 fav). 7 ran. 2l, sh. S C Williams.

8.10 (5f 42yd) 1, **Pure Passion** (C R Lyons, 7-2); 2, Shining Guest (12-1); 3, Mayflower Rock (7-1). 6 ran. NR: She Went Whoosh. ¾l, nk. S C Williams.

Placepot:£47.80 **Quadpot:£22.50**

Four-game ban for Pumas No 10 for 'intimidating' ref

Rugby union

Will Kelleher Deputy Rugby Correspondent

Argentina fly half Tomás Albornoz has been banned for four matches for angrily confronting referee Angus Gardner after last month's defeat by England.

A World Rugby disciplinary panel deemed that Albornoz showed "intimidatory conduct" while approaching Gardner twice after Argentina lost their Nations Championship Test 31-24 to England in Santiago del Estero.

The 28-year-old had to be restrained by his team-mates as he berated the Australian official. He was incensed after Argentina were denied a last-minute try by a marginal call from the television match official Brett Cronan, who helped to overturn Gardner's decision to award Bautista Delguy, the wing, a score in the corner.

Albornoz admitted the charge of intimidating a match official, and was initially suspended for six matches, but the panel reduced his ban to four games as he had a previously clear disciplinary record and agreed to apologise publicly and privately. He will miss three Argentina Tests, against South Africa on Saturday and Australia on August 29 and September 5. He will also miss Toulon's Top14 match against La Rochelle on September 12.

The UAR itself has not been punished by World Rugby.

WESSEL OOSTHUIZEN/PHOTOSPORT NZ

Nepia, below, was not selected for the All Blacks' tour to South Africa in 1928 because he was Maori. The "imported apartheid" continued until 1970, when Maori and Samoan players were finally involved for New Zealand, but a rough series was characterised by Du Preez's infamous tackle on Laidlaw, left

'All White' All Blacks, political protests and a boxer in the pack

In the first of a four-part series, **Elgan Alderman** looks at the 1921-76 tours between South Africa and New Zealand, and the birth of a fervid rivalry that would define rugby and was entwined with race

The rugby rivalry between New Zealand and South Africa, between the All Blacks and the Springboks, did not begin at McLean Park in Napier or in a nearby newspaper office, but that is where its political complexity emerged. It was September 1921, the 22nd match of a 24-game tour, with the Test series level at 1-1 and the decider ten days away, when the visiting Springboks beat New Zealand Maori 9-8. It was a bit of a dust-up and what happened afterwards kicked up a stink.

"The game was rough and unpleasant," Donald Summerville wrote in *The Encyclopaedia of Rugby Union*, "but was nothing compared with the scandal that followed when an offensive South African report on the match was published, recording Springbok disgust at being forced to play a non-white team." The leaked cable, written by the South African journalist Charles Blackett, was the first hint of scandal that festered for decades. It took generations for rugby's greatest rivalry to divorce itself from race. It is a tale about ideas of supremacy, in life and sport.

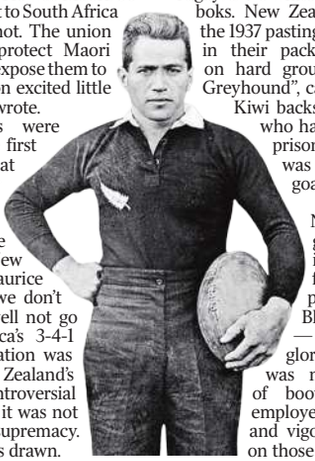
When the All Blacks and Springboks took to the fields of Europe on months-long odysseys in the early 20th century, they felt superior. The Mother Country codified rugby football, and the Dominions came over to show them how it was done. Honour was at stake, but one thing was not: the unofficial world championship. New Zealand and South Africa kept that to themselves. As Graeme Barrow, the author of *All Blacks Versus Springboks*, wrote: "Each country knew it could not call itself king until it had defeated the other."

Not for nothing did 21st-century organisers plan to gather them together and call it Rugby's Greatest Rivalry. In the quest for financial gain, New Zealand and South Africa have reverted to the series that gave them purpose, an eight-game schedule with four Tests, beginning tomorrow. It is the shorter, modern form of how these nations tussled with religious fervour between 1921 and 1996.

It is a history of scrum formations, Hennie Muller's midfield defence and the goalkicking of Don Clarke, but also of scandalous telegrams, omitted Maoris and protests that shook a nation. Politics meant that the All Blacks toured without Maoris, yet in New Zealand a Maori XV would face Springboks drawn from the white population of South Africa, like on that inaugural excursion in 1921.

When these nations finally met on a rugby field 105 years ago, they could not be separated. The deciding Test, in wind, rain and mud, ended 0-0. The series was shared and the unofficial world title bubbled away for 60 years — as did the build-up of "imported apartheid", the segregation of South Africa and its effect on New Zealand, from Blackett's cable onwards.

The All Blacks went to Europe in 1924-25 and returned as The Invincibles, with George Nepia, a 19-year-old full back, as the star. He was Maori. So when the squad went to South Africa in 1928, Nepia did not. The union said it wished to protect Maori players, so as not to expose them to insults. "His omission excited little comment," Barrow wrote.



The All Blacks were embarrassed in the first Test, a 17-0 defeat that remained their heaviest until 1999, and went 2-1 down in the series. Before the decider, the New Zealand captain, Maurice Brownlie, said: "If we don't win, we might as well not go home." South Africa's 3-4-1 scrummaging formation was superior to New Zealand's 2-3-2 (with a controversial roving forward) but it was not enough for overall supremacy. Again, the series was drawn.

At last, in 1937, rugby had its unofficial world champion, when the Springboks won 2-1 in the All Blacks' backyard. They were dubbed "the greatest team ever to leave New Zealand". Early South Africa teams were known for scintillating back play. Now they had a love of the tight, choosing scrums instead of line-outs, permissible under the laws of the time. "Skrum, skrum, skrum" was the phrase in a telegram by Paul Roos, the former captain.

New Zealand returned to South Africa in 1949. There was more noise around player absences now, and calls for a boycott. A Maori squad toured Australia simultaneously as a consolation, missing out on a low point in Kiwi rugby: a 4-0 whitewash by the Springboks. New Zealand responded to the 1937 pasting by prioritising size in their pack, which backfired on hard grounds. Muller, "The Greyhound", caused panic among Kiwi backs and Okey Geffin, who had practised while a prisoner of war in Poland, was South Africa's goalkicking prop.

By the 1956 tour, New Zealand had a great goalkicker too in Clarke, and the full back's boot was pivotal in the All Blacks' 3-1 home win — their first slice of glory in the rivalry. That was not the only use of boots: New Zealand employed up-and-unders and vigorous Kiwi rucking on those lying on the wrong side. The selection of Kevin Skinner, a boxer, in the pack was controversial, with a view to softening up Springboks in a series remembered for its violence.

Politics would not go away. Between the third and fourth Tests, the Springboks beat a listless Maori XV 37-0. Fifty-four years later, Muru Walters claimed that Ernest Corbett, the minister of Maori affairs, had told the team to lose "for the future of rugby".

In 1960, politics overtook rugby. The common view that matters in South Africa were up to South Africans, not Kiwis, was beginning to change. "All Blacks to be All White" was a headline in The Times in 1959. Now there were protests and a tagline of "No Maoris, no tour". The Sharpeville massacre of March 1960, when police killed or wounded more than 300 demonstrators, heightened opposition to South Africa. Rugby went ahead and the All Blacks operated a ten-man game, with Clarke's kicking influential. Winning away continued to prove elusive: the Springboks won 2-1 at home in 1960, the All Blacks 3-1 at home in 1965.

In the latter half of the 1960s, the Halt All Racist Tours movement grew. Hendrik Verwoerd, the prime minister of South Africa, who was later assassinated, reiterated that Maori players would not be included in touring squads, leading to the cancellation of New Zealand's 1967 tour. When the All Blacks did return to South Africa in 1970, the situation had developed. There were Maori and Samoan players involved: Sid Going, Bryan Williams, Buff Milner and Blair Furlong. This wasn't a drastic policy change but a fudge, the quartet given the status of "honorary whites". Ken Gray, the New Zealand prop, retired out of private, moral objection.

The action was again rough in 1970, characterised by an image of Frik du Preez tackling Chris Laidlaw with a clenched fist to the head. The Springboks triumphed 3-1. South African isolation had begun in cricket and the Olympics, but rugby — and the All Blacks — mattered more than any of those sports. "If the Springboks won, they reasoned, other nations would still want to play them, to topple them from their position at the top," Barrow wrote.

The rivalry dulled in the 1970s, not only because of politics but because, perhaps for the first time, it was not the unofficial world championship. The British Lions' victory in New Zealand in 1971, followed by their Invincibles tour to South Africa in 1974, put the northern hemisphere at the top of the game.

After the 1973 tour was cancelled, New Zealand made it back to South Africa in 1976 — another 3-1 loss for the tourists — with six players granted "honorary white" status. Another development was non-white players in tour games against the All Blacks.

This did little to quell global fury. The Soweto uprising of 1976 came after rulings around the use of Afrikaans in schools, and South African police killed or injured more than 1,000 protesters. More than 20 African nations withdrew from the Montreal Olympics because of New Zealand's rugby links with South Africa. But in South Africa, rugby was the establishment's haven. "Thank God for the All Blacks," a newspaper executive was quoted as saying as he turned from reports of Soweto to sport, "disaster has not taken to the rugby field yet."

When the tour ended — another 3-1 win for the home side, South Africa — the situation was sufficiently febrile that The Dominion, a Wellington newspaper, wrote of the final Test as if it were the end of rugby's greatest rivalry: "Whatever the image of South Africa when the dust settles, it seems clear that the Ellis Park referee blew the whistle also on All Black-Springbok encounters as they have been known for 50 years. New Zealand has to clarify without equivocation its attitude to African minority rule and its antagonism, so often questioned overseas, to apartheid."

1976 was not the end. What followed in 1981 was one of the most unsettled periods in New Zealand history. That's a story for another time.

South Africa v New Zealand

Rugby's Greatest Rivalry fixtures

Stormers v New Zealand: August 7, Cape Town

Sharks v New Zealand: August 11, Durban

Bulls v New Zealand: August 15, Pretoria

First Test: August 22, Johannesburg

Lions v New Zealand: August 25, Johannesburg

Second Test: August 29, Cape Town

Third Test: September 5, Johannesburg

Fourth Test: September 12, Baltimore, US

Mike Atherton

Chief Cricket Correspondent

Tall order balancing side post-Stokes

'Ben Stokes is the type of bloke you'd like to have in your side," said Mike Brearley three years before Stokes became England captain. "He's a sort of leader, no doubt occasionally for ill late at night, but also for good in the side. If you were going into the jungle, he'd be the first choice to go with you."

No doubt, Brearley was thinking a little of his own good fortune in having Ian Botham, a similarly irrepressible all-rounder, during his own captaincy years. Brearley's legend as a captain was made in the 1981 Ashes, as England beat Australia 3-1, but it was inconceivable that he could have done it without Botham's resurgence that summer, much of which, of course, was down to Brearley's empathetic management and sure touch.

Captains who have had a genuine all-rounder know how fortunate they have been; selection and balancing the side is far more straightforward with one than without. Since Botham's debut in 1977, England have been blessed in having three such — Andrew Flintoff, Botham and Stokes — who were capable of winning Tests with either bat and ball for, give or take, 35 out of those 50 years, though they were not at their peak for all that time.

Now they don't. England's selectors will announce their first post-Stokes Test squad this morning and the most important consideration will be how to balance the team in his absence. It is not straightforward, simply because there is no obvious like-for-like replacement. There is no one option — though there are plenty of different selection scenarios to compensate for his absence — who fits the bill precisely.

I remember the conundrum all too well. The period of my captaincy, 1993 to 1998, coincided with an interregnum between Botham and Flintoff and we tried numerous ways to finesse selection, most of which had their drawbacks. We tried Alec Stewart as a wicket-keeper. Stewart was a wonderful cricketer but an all-rounder who is a wicket-keeper still gives rise to a slightly unbalanced side.

If he batted in the top six, the tail felt long; if we played the extra batsman, the bowling was compromised. The problem was compounded further by Stewart's brilliance as an opening batsman, and Jack Russell's as a wicketkeeper. We were never quite sure what to do. We had some good all-rounders, Dominic Cork and Craig White chief among them, and, in due course, White became the closest of those to hold down a place in the top six and as one of four seamers.

Benedict Bermange, the statistician, ran the numbers for England's results with or without Botham, Flintoff or Stokes, and I was surprised that they were not more definitive. Since Botham's debut, England have won 39 per cent of matches with one of the three in the team and lost 36 per cent; without any of them in the team those numbers were 33 and 33.

Taking their peak years (a five-year period when their ICC rankings were highest) those numbers are more definitive. Botham's best five-year stretch brought a 37 per cent win record, with 22 per cent losses; Flintoff's best stretch produced wins 43 per cent of the time and 34 per cent losses, while the relative numbers for Stokes are 49 set against 39. The draw has become far less frequent over that time-span, which accounts for the rising percentage of both wins and losses.

In Ashes cricket, some of the most memorable wins have been inspired by these cricketers, 1981 and 2005 being the prime examples. There have been 26 Ashes series since Botham's debut: in those where one of those three all-rounders played, England won eight series and lost six (two were drawn). Without any of them, eight series were lost, only two won. That is stark, although the best Ashes performance in that entire span — England's 3-1 win away from home in 2010-11 — came without an all-rounder.

I then ran the numbers for Root's first spell of captaincy, and the difference between when he had Stokes in his team and when he didn't was considerable. Root has captained England on 65 occasions, 46 of them with Stokes, 19 without. He has won 27 of those matches, and 21 of those wins came with Stokes in the team, only six without Stokes. As he prepares to begin his second stint as England captain, Root must face up to the challenge of the absence of Stokes again.

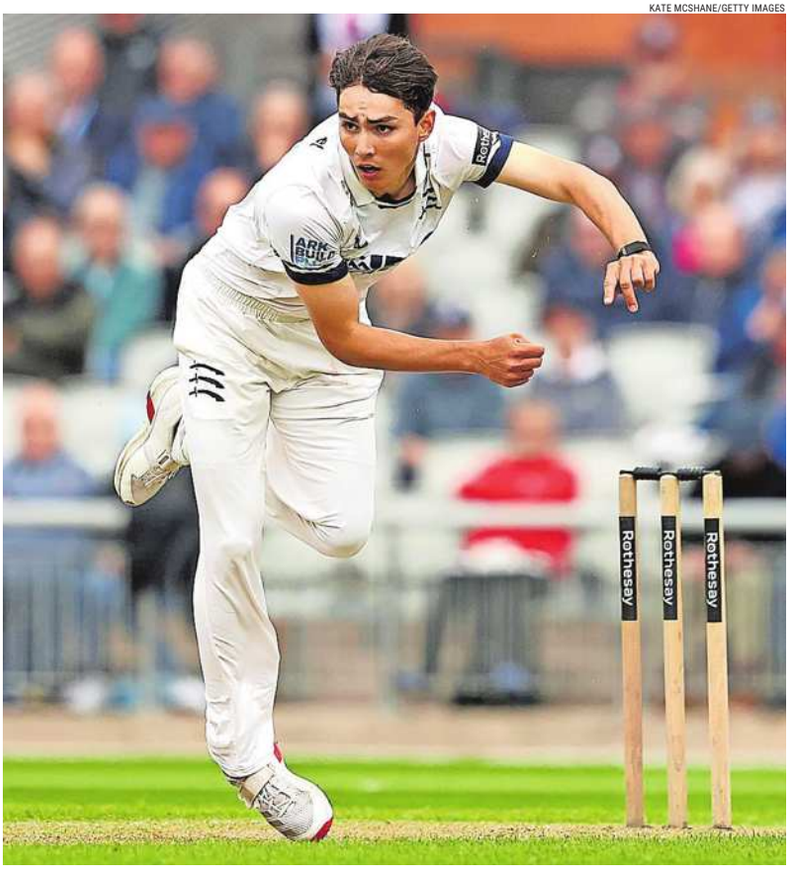
Previously, to compensate for life without Stokes, Root's teams went for a variety of cricketers who offered all-round skills. At the start of the 2017 Ashes, Moeen Ali, Jonny Bairstow and Chris Woakes filled slots at six, seven and eight. Sam Curran joined the mix a year later as did Jos Buttler. The latter period coincided with Ed Smith's period as national selector. He tackled the absence of Stokes in early 2018 in his book *Making Decisions* when he outlined the reasons for Curran's selection in place of Stokes.

Broadly, Smith liked Curran's attitude, left-arm variety and enterprising batting. No one would argue he is a better cricketer than Stokes, but Smith reckoned Curran helped make everyone else a little better too. Before Curran's Test debut, Smith wrote: "At the very last minute, there was an attempt to change plans and (cautiously) recall an extra specialist batter instead of an all-rounder [Curran] for an all-rounder [Stokes]." He doesn't say who wanted the extra batter, but, as captain, it could have been Root.

As it happens, Curran is injured right now and would not be able to get through a Test match as a bowling all-rounder, so is out of consideration for the opening Test against Pakistan. As a result, England will probably go with a batsman who can bowl, like Dan Lawrence or Will Jacks at six, and Jamie Smith at seven, thus allowing them to play four seamers still, which is generally how Tests are won and lost at Headingley.

Once fit, though, Stokes's retirement is good news for Curran, who will come back into the Test equation, buttressed by others who can offer all-round abilities, as in the early days of Smith's tenure as national selector. Stokes's absence, therefore, will be bad news for a specialist wicketkeeper, and good news for those who bat as well, like Smith; it is good news for batsmen who can bowl, like Lawrence and Jacks; good news for spinners who bat, like Rehan Ahmed and Calvin Harrison — and bad news for Shoaib Bashir.

KATE MCSHANE/GETTY IMAGES



Morgan, the 18-year-old Middlesex all-rounder, is a recent graduate of the England Under-19 team with the potential to make the step up to the senior side in the future, but he still has a long way to go

Who can be next great all-rounder?

In time, English cricket will be hoping that a young player arrives who has the capabilities of becoming the next Botham, Flintoff or Stokes, though being tagged as such was invariably an unwelcome albatross for the generation that followed Beefy, many of whom struggled to live up to the billing.

Of all the bright young cricketers I've seen in the county game this year, the one with the most potential to become the kind of all-rounder we have been discussing is 18-year-old Seb Morgan from Middlesex. He's a long way off from being ready but, as a recent graduate of England's Under-19 team, he's one to keep an eye on.

Right now, though, he is warming the bench for MI London and has not played for a month. He joins a raft of other good young cricketers who are currently not playing at the height of the cricket season. Alongside Morgan you could add the names of Caleb Falconer (Middlesex, currently with Southern Brave); Ben Mayes (Hampshire and Manchester Super Giants) and, until he returned to action for Hampshire in the one-day cup on Wednesday, Manny Lumsden (Hampshire and Southern Brave).

It also adds to the concerns that my colleague Steve James wrote about recently, around the challenges of producing all-format players. While sitting on the bench, they are missing out on 50-over experience with their counties. If international cricket comes calling sooner rather than later, it will be another cohort asked to play 50-over cricket with little domestic experience of it. Selected for, but not playing in the Hundred is good for their bank balance; less good for their development.

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Fleming wants Hussey on staff

T20 World Cup campaign in 2022, when he was hired to offer local expertise. The 51-year-old is the head coach of the Welsh Fire men's team in the Hundred where one of his senior players is Joe Root, who has been named as England Test captain after the shock retirement of Ben Stokes.

Welsh Fire have been approached for comment but at this stage it is understood to be initial discussions between Fleming and Hussey. It is possible that Hussey may be offered the head coach role at CSK to fill the vacancy left by Fleming, which may be a more attractive and lucrative offer than the assistant coach position with England.

A busy winter means England may want a bigger pool of assistant coaches to cover Test and white-ball matches. Trescothick, Carl Hopkinson and Sarah Taylor are the England assistant coaches at present, with Mike Yardy, who is the head coach of the under-19s, also working with the senior sides sometimes. Tim Southee, the former New Zealand seam bowler, and Jeetan Patel, a former New Zealand spinner, are part of the backroom teams as fast bowling and spin bowling coaches.

England will name their squad for the first Test against Pakistan today. It is unlikely there will be any shock inclusions, but the selectors will need to decide on how they replace Stokes. Marcus North, the national selector, Rob Key, the managing director, and Root met yesterday and took some input from Fleming and Trescothick. Ollie Robinson, who played in only the first Test of the summer having been recalled to the side, is expected to be selected. The leg-spinning all-rounder Rehan Ahmed will be under consideration, as will two other all-rounders who can bowl spin: Will Jacks, who played in the Ashes, and Dan Lawrence. They could bat at No 6 or No 7 and allow England to pick four seam bowlers. Of the other all-rounders Somerset's Craig Overton could be considered but Sam Curran, who bowls left-arm seam, is injured.

Sport Golf

LIV claim new funding – but future of top stars in doubt

JASON BUTLER/GETTY IMAGES

DeChambeau led a players-only meeting on Tuesday while O'Neil, inset, has been sounding out investors for some time

Tom Kershaw

LIV Golf appears to have secured a lifeline in the form of a new investor after the Saudi Public Investment Fund confirmed that it was pulling its funding of the league.

Scott O'Neil, the LIV Golf chief executive, claimed in a press conference at Trump National Bedminster that an agreement had been signed that would "play a key role in supporting the path forward for the league's next era". He went on to claim there was "strong interest from more than a dozen additional parties to potentially serve as minority investors".

O'Neil declined to name the new investor or the additional partners, but added that the LIV 2.0 would be structured so that the players are the majority equity holders in the league and claimed the investment would underpin its future through the 2030 season if completed.

It has been mooted in recent days that LIV could file for bankruptcy because of the money owed to players — not least Jon Rahm, who signed a $300million (now £223million) deal in 2023. The players would in turn become creditors, with the equity being offered to them in LIV 2.0 based on the value of their outstanding contracts, along with their importance to the new venture.

O'Neil did not rule out LIV filing for bankruptcy and described the situation as "fluid" and said the board would "consider the best options at that time". "LIV Golf has an agreement in place with a lead investor, signed by the investor and approved by the board, to anchor the transaction and play a key role in supporting the path forward for the league's next era, driven by and for the players," O'Neil said in a statement.

"We're also seeing strong interest from more than a dozen additional parties to potentially serve as minority investors, creating a multi-partner model built for long-term stability and growth.

"Notably, our next chapter will make our players the majority equity holders in LIV Golf, a first for a major global sports league, and gives the league the foundation to keep growing the game worldwide.

"We anticipate finalising terms in the coming weeks, with the goal of entering a transaction in September. In the meantime, our focus is on delivering a great week for fans and players at Bedminster and finishing the 2026 season strong."

O'Neil has desperately been sounding out potential investors since the PIF pulled the plug on the league in April after spending more than $5billion to lure the likes of Rahm, Bryson DeChambeau and Phil Mickelson from the PGA Tour with huge contracts and purses.

LIV's event in New Orleans, which was scheduled to take place in June, was cancelled as a result, and uncertainty remains over whether its $40million season-ending team championship will take place in Michigan at the end of the month. LIV has also faced legal action relating to an unpaid vendor, trademark infringement, and an IP dispute with its predecessor the Premier Golf League, while the Asian Tour, a key partner in LIV's international events and the league's pursuit of world ranking points, opted to realign with the PGA and DP World Tour in July.

If all those hurdles can be navigated, LIV 2.0 is expected to feature a scaled-back schedule, reducing the number of events from 14 to ten. Half of the tournaments will be held in the US, while the rest will be staged internationally and branded as "Team Majors". The lavish prize money — the purse for this week's event is $30million — is also set to be reined in significantly.

The announcement followed a players-only meeting led by DeChambeau on Tuesday at Trump National Bedminster. DeChambeau's LIV contract expires at the end of the 2026 season but he has indicated a willingness to remain part of the league's future. Rahm was non-committal when asked if he would play on LIV in 2027 at the London event last month.

When asked about DeChambeau and Rahm's future, O'Neil went off on a long tangent about Major League Baseball and how it adapted to win over younger fans. Pressed again about the duo, O'Neil remained vague and instead referenced the star power of Dean Burmester — a fine player but hardly a household name — in South Africa.

"We've been blessed with stars," O'Neil said. "I define it a little bit differently, and for those of you who have had the privilege and pleasure to travel with us around the world, you get to see it. But I don't think there was any bigger star on the planet in South Africa than Dean Burmester. And I don't think there was any bigger star on the planet than Cam Smith when we were in Australia. I think when you have a global game and you have 57 players from 21 countries and you're playing in ten countries on five continents, how you define stars gets really interesting.

"So while I have all the time in the world for Jon Rahm and Bryson DeChambeau, I think I'd be remiss in saying they're not only two of the biggest, best golfers on the planet, but I think they're some of the biggest stars in sports, let alone golf. I would certainly love them to come along for the ride and journey because they carry maybe more weight than anybody in the game.

"We have enough support from enough players, and we have such an interesting format and global format, I think we'll do quite well in getting the right stars for this game."

Leaked documents reveal Fifa Super League plan

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Infantino has promised the final will indeed be there instead of the Bernabéu in Madrid — Spain, Portugal and Morocco are co-hosting the tournament, with three matches taking place in South America. Infantino's opponents say any decision taken by him about the final will not be binding and can be changed by his replacement.

A Fifa spokesman denied Infantino had made such a promise, saying: "It is false and misleading to claim the Fifa president has made any promise in relation to hosting the World Cup 2030 final. A decision will be made by Fifa in due course."

This year the Spanish FA president Rafael Louzán insisted that Spain "will be the leader of the 2030 World Cup and the final of that World Cup will be here".

Infantino has also chosen Rabat to be the venue for next year's Fifa Congress, where he had hoped to run unopposed for his fourth term as president. At the very least he will face a challenger there but leaders of Uefa, Concacaf and the Asian football confederation want him out immediately.

Infantino says he wants to "restore confidence" in Fifa

Meanwhile, those aides still loyal to Infantino have been trying to persuade "Fifa legends" — a group of former international players who have been paid to appear at Fifa events — to publicly support the Fifa president but so far without success. Another source told The Times: "They would love a famous former player to come out in support of Infantino but it appears he is too toxic after the World Cup sell-off plan."

Luís Figo, the former Portugal forward who has been a Uefa adviser since 2017, called for Infantino to resign as president in a damning social media post. "Infantino has debased the office that he promised to elevate," Figo said. "He has lied, deceived and tried to feather his own nest at the expense of the game he is supposed to serve. He has lost the support of his senior staff, his closest advisers, the vast majority of people who devote their lives to this sport and even, it would seem, the Fifa Peace Prize winner [Donald Trump]. It is too late to save his dignity but it is not too late to save football. He should go. Now."

Carney, the prime minister of Canada, said: "The idea that proper governance is not to disclose to your closest advisers, your chief operating officer, your fellow board members, something that you're even considering, let alone proposing — that should be fatal. I certainly don't have confidence in Mr Infantino after this point. This is not how you run any business, a small business, let alone something that is a global responsibility like football."

Meanwhile, leaked documents show that Infantino held talks with top European clubs about forming a breakaway competition that could have been called the Fifa Super League. A "term sheet", a non-binding agreement dated October 2020, spelt out how a Super League could be launched with Fifa's involvement. Fifa is referred to as 'WOI' in the document, which was first reported by The Guardian and has been seen by The Times. After the launch of the European Super League in April 2021, Infantino came out against the breakaway competition but there were suspicions at the time that he had been previously involved with the clubs.

The term sheet states: "SL Founding Clubs commit to a non-closed format for the SL with transparent sporting criteria for participation of additional teams. Exact rules around access will be agreed before June 2022 in consultation with WOI and will be based on sporting criteria. The SL is open to discuss naming the competition WOI SL."

Alarm over delay of £185m of Club World Cup funds

The Fifa crisis has caused widespread alarm among smaller European clubs about their share of $250 million solidarity money promised more than a year ago from the new Club World Cup (Martyn Ziegler writes).

More than 50 clubs have contacted European Football Clubs (EFC), the representative organisation for European sides, expressing alarm that the funds have still not materialised despite Fifa's promises. Fifa told The Times the $250 million (about £185 million) remains in place and that discussions are continuing on its distribution. The money was promised to smaller professional clubs across the world as a benefit from the Club World Cup, played in the US. The tournament funds for those teams that did participate, including Chelsea and Manchester City, are understood to have been paid. The crisis has engulfed Fifa's president Gianni Infantino after the collapse of his scheme to sell off stakes in the World Cup to private investors caused further alarm.

Jaissle must cure Howe hangover

Martin Hardy

SERENA TAYLOR/NEWCASTLE UNITED/GETTY IMAGES

Jaissle has plenty in his in-tray as the new Newcastle head coach meets Thiaw and Woltemade, left. Below: Steur, 18, is among several youthful arrivals at the club

Matthias Jaissle was finally unveiled yesterday as the head coach of Newcastle United, signing a four-year contract.

The 38-year-old German, who has been with his new players since the weekend at a training camp in La Manga, spoke about how "incredibly excited" he was about the club's future, with his contract situation resolved. "I fully and unreservedly believe in this project, the ambition and the direction the club is taking," Jaissle said. "There is a clear vision, strong leadership and an exceptional platform to build on."

Jaissle won two Austrian championships with RB Salzburg and two AFC Champions League Elite titles in Saudi Arabia with Al-Ahli. However, his big day was in part overshadowed by another, largely expected, high-profile departure, with Arsenal and Newcastle finally reaching a compromised £75 million fee for the Brazilian midfielder Bruno Guimarães.

Does Guimarães heading to Arsenal after Sandro Tonali and Anthony Gordon have already gone mean Newcastle are in crisis?

Well, they probably should, and still yet could, be in crisis, but the possibility of something new carries with it a curiosity of what lies around the corner. First, let's deal with the sales of Guimarães, Tonali and Gordon, which follow last summer's loss of Alexander Isak to Liverpool. That's Newcastle's four best players gone in 12 months, the ones who fired the club, along with former head coach Eddie Howe, to a first domestic trophy in 70 years. There should be a bit more mourning of the loss, and the complete break-up of that team, which, with better investment, and kinder financial regulations, could have kicked on.

So has this been another disastrous summer to rival the bonfire of last year?

No, because Newcastle, without a sporting director and a chief executive back then, bore the look of lottery winners on a spending spree. There is an argument raging among Newcastle fans about whether £75 million is a fair price for the club's talismanic captain in Guimarães. The context from last summer is that it is only £6 million more than Newcastle paid for Nick Woltemade and only £20 million more than they paid Brentford for Yoane Wissa and the one Premier League goal he mustered last season. The consequences of the £250 million spent last summer are still being felt. Look at the fact that they had to sell Gordon in a hurry before the end of the financial year. This has been about balancing the books. The dream of competing at the top of the Premier League with Newcastle, for Isak, Tonali, Gordon and Guimarães, is over, and could be impossible for those left.

So will Jaissle need to be a miracle worker?

He will have to hit the ground running. There seems a lot of understanding of the difficulty of his position and there is genuine excitement to see what he can produce. Jack Charlton said a manager should y stay for only five years, and in terms of Howe, that might ring true. The supporters want to see what Jaissle can do. As it stands, he has got three new outfield players — the winger Bazoumana Touré, 20, midfielders Aladji Bamba, 20, and Sean Steur, 18, and two new goalkeepers in Ewen Jaouen, 20, and Lukas Hornicek, 24. The plan for months has been to build a younger, fresher squad. Give Newcastle their due, they are doing that. Jaissle, however, needs more from the rebuild to have a chance.

Why did Newcastle want him?

Newcastle sources insist the club's hierarchy are delighted to have snared a man who they believe is one of the most exciting young coaches in the world. That explains why they spent days going through reams of paperwork to reach agreement with Al-Ahli, who are deeply unhappy with the move, and why they had to pay the Saudi Pro League side £9.4 million in compensation. The timing, after they waited to see if Howe would change his mind on his desire to leave, is actually why, privately, they think it will ultimately work in their favour. It made them go hunting for a new manager, rather than go through the usual candidates who were available at the end of the season. What does Jaissleball look like? High press, full tempo and moving forward quickly. A bit like peak Howe.

Transfer-wise, what do they still need to buy?

Newcastle need a right back, and they have been linked with plenty, including Andrei Ratiu at Real Vallecano, and they need a replacement for Guimarães, with Real Sociedad's Luka Sucic a target. They could probably do with a more prolific centre forward, but thus far there are no signs of trying to offload Woltemade, Wissa or Will Osula.

Does the squad lack leadership and experience?

They have plenty of experience at the back in Dan Burn, Sven Botman and Fabian Schär. Whether they have enough pace there is another question, but the loss of Kieran Trippier, Guimarães and Tonali potentially takes away the heart of a dressing room.

How engaged are the Saudis still in the Newcastle project?

Each insistence is that they want to put more money into the club, but can't because of financial rules. An announcement on buying land for a new training ground is expected very soon.

After another summer of upheaval, what would represent success?

In all reality, getting into the top ten in year one of the reset would be success.

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Arsenal agree Guimarães deal

deal, with Newcastle now ready to accept the bid.

Guimarães met the incoming Newcastle manager Matthias Jaissle, who is replacing Eddie Howe after his departure last week, at their pre-season training camp in La Manga and informed him of his desire to leave. Jaissle, 38, was officially confirmed as Newcastle's new head coach last night but the German has been with the players in La Manga since the weekend.

Newcastle have already sold Anthony Gordon (aged 25, £70 million) and Sandro Tonali (26, £100 million) this summer and have insisted they will only let players go at top value.

Guimarães, who will turn 29 in November, joined Newcastle in January 2022 from Lyon for £42 million and went on to captain the club to their first major domestic trophy since 1955 in the 2025 Carabao Cup final victory over Liverpool at Wembley.

This week, Newcastle confirmed the signing of the Czech Republic goalkeeper Lukas Hornicek from Braga for a fee believed to be £25.7 million. He is the second goalkeeper Newcastle have signed this summer and is their fifth addition overall.

Celtic manager O'Neill, 74, in hospital after 'small procedure'

Michael Grant
Scottish Football Correspondent

The Celtic manager Martin O'Neill is in hospital after undergoing what the club called "a small procedure".

The Northern Irishman, who is 74, will be kept in for one or two days and he is expected to return to lead the team when Celtic play Kilmarnock on Sunday. His assistants, Shaun Maloney and Mark Fotheringham, will take training in his absence. O'Neill was in charge as usual when the Scottish Premiership champions began their defence of a fifth consecutive league title with a home win over Dundee on Monday night. O'Neill then fulfilled all his media obligations as normal after the match.

The club issued a statement shortly before 4pm yesterday afternoon. It read: "In response to speculation, we can confirm that Martin O'Neill has undergone a small procedure in hospital.

"We would envisage Martin being released from hospital in the next day or two and on behalf of Martin we would like to thank supporters for their kind wishes. We would ask that the privacy of Martin and his family is respected."

Fans of Celtic and other clubs took to social media after the news emerged, wishing the veteran manager a full and speedy recovery.

O'Neill is a legendary figure in Celtic history, first for a hugely successful first spell from 2000 to 2005 and then for two periods as interim boss which saved them last season and ultimately secured a league and Scottish Cup double. First he answered the call from the controlling shareholder Dermot Desmond when Brendan Rodgers stepped down in controversial circumstances. Then, when he left to be replaced by Wilfried Nancy, he returned again after Nancy's disastrous 33-day reign.

O'Neill's experience and calmness were pivotal as Celtic came from behind both Rangers and Hearts in the title race and snatched the league by beating Hearts on the final day of the Premiership season. He then added the Scottish Cup to take his trophy count to nine as Celtic manager.

In June, he agreed a one-year contract with the option of a second year. Brian Wilson, the interim chairman, praised the "leadership, inspiration and success" he brought to Celtic. Desmond said: "Time and again Martin has shown his qualities and what he can bring to Celtic". O'Neill, who will turn 75 next March, said it was a great privilege to continue as Celtic manager.

A boozy Mayfair dinner and no-rules ethos: how De Zerbi lifted Tottenham

Italian coach explains to **Peter Rutzler** how belief in 'total freedom' saved club, and outlines his aims for new season

Roberto De Zerbi prefers to be uninhibited and it is here, in this psyche, that you can start to unpick how he helped Tottenham Hotspur to escape the resignation of their freefall last season. Players are drawn to him, beguiled by a maverick who was once a creative himself, a No 10, and that feeds into his philosophy.

"I don't love rules," he says. "I read a book where it was written that creative people don't follow any rules. I like creative players. I don't want to set any rules. Just a couple, two or three at most. I am not a policeman, not even with my children. Freedom, totally freedom. One is one. You are like me, or like a kitman, [we are] the same. But every day we have to push, every day we have to deserve to stay here or to play football or to earn the money we are earning, otherwise it's not normal. We have to respect the luck we have had in our life."

And if his players break that trust?

"What do you want to know, if I punch the player?" And with that the room erupts, and not for the first time. De Zerbi is compelling company, a magnetic presence who pulls you in with his quiet, gravelly voice and staccato English — supported by interventions from his long-serving and trusted translator, Enrico Venturelli — and then he snaps you out of a trance with a sharp quip. He reads you with a piercing stare and speaks with the conviction of a priest.

Many in the game preach his gospel. Pep Guardiola said he was one of the most influential coaches of the past 20 years and others, including Enzo Maresca and Francesco Farioli, cite his impact. "It is one of the few things I feel a bit embarrassed about," De Zerbi says. "I am sure about myself, always fully charged. But when I started to be a coach, I couldn't imagine ever becoming a coach in the Premier League, with Tottenham, and then the biggest coaches in the world spoke well about me, or [said] that I am a reference for them. I become shy. I am not used to that and I don't think I will ever get used to it.

"Last season when I went into the big stadiums I spoke with my assistant and said, 'We are not used to working in this kind of stadium with atmosphere'. We are lucky because we started from the shit of football."

Tottenham were in the shit, to borrow his phrase, when he took charge on the last day of March. He feared the worst after only one game and decided the best course of action would be for his players to drown their sorrows. Tottenham had suffered a damaging 1-0 defeat by Sunderland at the Stadium of Light and the sight that greeted him in the dressing room at full-time was apocalyptic; a mess of anguish and despair.

"I didn't tell you in the press conference, but it was like this: all people were crying, lying down on the floor," he says, reflecting from the relative safety of pre-season, a few months on, in a boardroom tucked away on Tottenham's private floor of the Intercontinental hotel in Sydney. "I said, 'Have we passed away?'"

Tottenham were 18th in the table and relegation loomed. The next day, at the club's training ground and before the players returned to work, De Zerbi issued new instructions to every member of staff.

"After the Sunderland game, the people inside the training ground were sad and negative," he says. "That day I organised a meeting without players [just staff] and I said, 'The first one I see saying something negative, I send you home immediately. I don't want to see anyone sad, negative or crying. If you stay positive, I give my word, we will stay together here.' It's another crucial part, because the players live with these people. They have to feel good. Yes, they have a good salary and everything is good for them and that's important in their job, but [it's also] in their behaviour, attitude and spirit."

The cure for the players?

"One big dinner in Bacchanalia in Mayfair, with alcohol," he says, to laughter. "Alcohol is a good medicine, if you enjoy it normally and seriously and not as stupid people. I believe in staying together. Then, I transferred every day my opinion about them. I think they considered themselves in that moment to be worse than people thought. There was the possibility to stay up and to win. The potential of the team was very high."

> "I like to think I deserve to want the top players, because now this club deserves to build a top team

'IF I LOVE YOU AS A PLAYER, YOU'LL BECOME UNBELIEVABLE'

De Zerbi signed a five-year contract upon his appointment, despite wanting a break after swimming in the caldera of Marseille. He initially resisted the pleas of Spurs.

"I spoke with Vinai [Venkatesham, the chief executive], and with Johan Lange [sporting director], but I didn't want to come [earlier], because I suffered on my way out from Marseille," he says. But they discussed transfer targets and he jumped. He says he would not have bailed out if he had failed to save Spurs from relegation. "It was true, I couldn't live even in the Championship, I would suffer, I would pass [away]," he says. "But if you sign [for] five years, you can't leave after two months just because you play in the Championship."

This was a rescue mission of the mind, not tactical genius. De Zerbi's football has been lauded everywhere he has gone but there was no time to decorate; the house was burning down. "The most important thing about my job is the relationships I have as a man," he says. "Values, relationships, the human part of football. Football is here, in the knowledge in football, the mentality to play, press, manage the game in every stadium — away, at home, nothing changes. But in the beginning of the coach, there is a man. Without relationships I am not able to work. Without relationships you can't play good football and have a good style of play, and especially in the tough moments you go on the human part. For that, this is maybe my best version [of my career] last season. Twenty per cent coach, 80 per cent the person.

"I was proud and happy, but I don't feel last season was my achievement — it was the players."

Tottenham transfers

In	
S Tonali	£100m
M Fernandes	£85m
JP van Hecke (left)	£51m
M Senesi	Free
A Robertson	Free
M Dubravka	Free
Out	
L Vuskovic	£46m
W Lankshear	£10m
A Véliz	£8m
A Devine	£4m

Now he wants to construct a team that can put the past two seasons behind them. The players have been enthusiastic, relishing his insistence on forward play, and controlling games with the ball. The defender Micky van de Ven insisted they would be "more enjoyable" for people to watch. What would the players need to do to earn another night out?

"No, nothing!" he says. "I hope they organise one for themselves, because in sport, between players, between players and the coach, if you have respect, it is normal, no? If you have respect and value a person, it's much better. If you have respect, value and love — friendship, care — you become top, top, top.

"Respect is normal. 'Coach, good morning, hello.' You have respect. If I believe in you, it's much better. If I love you — between players, the coach — you become unbelievable."

This approach is something De Zerbi has gleaned from life experience.

"When I felt the relationship with the teacher as a student at school, or with the coach as a player, I was able to give my best," he says. "If I didn't feel the connection, if I didn't feel he appreciated me, the teacher, or a coach, I closed my head [mind], we start a war."

> After Sunderland, all people were crying, lying down on the floor. I said, 'Have we passed away?'

LESSONS FROM THE TONY BLOOM 'UNIVERSITY'

Now he is plotting a path away from trouble for Spurs. They have spent more than £237 million on transfers this summer and De Zerbi wants two or three more signings. He feels he has an excellent relationship with the Spurs hierarchy. "We are working very well, it's my best connection with a board," he says. He is a coach who has had combustible

EURASIA SPORT IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES; ASHLEY WESTERN/SHUTTERSTOCK

Anti-clockwise from main: De Zerbi is in his first pre-season with Spurs after guiding them to safety, with Bacchanalia in Mayfair helping with the revival. The coach told Van Hecke, one of six signings this summer: "Now you have to join me," after the centre back set up Rutter's goal in the 2-2 draw with Brighton last season

relationships with those upstairs in the past. "If the owner doesn't respect me, it doesn't matter if you're an owner or not. In my life I always thought like this. Sometimes I have had bad ends to relationships, but with 80 to 90 per cent we have a great relationship."

He says working with Tony Bloom at Brighton & Hove Albion was a "university". "The money of my club, I consider my money," he adds on the intricacies of the transfer market and selling Luka Vuskovic to Brighton. "It's like the owner is my father; you don't want to ask your father to spend money or to lose money.

"If we bring a player in, if we sell a player, it's one family."

De Zerbi says he is "like a shark" when he has a transfer target in mind, reflected in how he went to Brescia, to Sandro Tonali's home, to persuade the midfielder to sign for £100 million from Newcastle United; and unlike many other coaches, he loves navigating the transfer window. "If the coach calls the player, you can build a special connection at the beginning, because the player knows you are the key for this transfer, and maybe this player feels he has to give you back something more.

"With Mateus Fernandes [signed for £85 million], I spoke with his parents. With JP [van Hecke], after the Everton game, I sent him a message: 'F*** off, you wanted to push down Tottenham when you made the assist to Georginio Rutter [he set up a 95th-minute equaliser in a crushing 2-2 draw with Brighton in April]. Now you have to join me — yes or yes, you have no choice!' After the game, in my office at Tottenham stadium, I sent a message to my daughter, and then to JP." Van Hecke signed for £52 million.

First five league fixtures

Brentford (A) Sat, Aug 22
Newcastle (H) Sat, Aug 29
Nott'm Forest (A) Sat, Sep 5
Everton (H) Sat, Sep 12
Aston Villa (H) Sat, Sep 19

De Zerbi is relishing the chance to make his mark on the Premier League.

"It's a big opportunity for me, because I deserve to stay here now, not just for my career but also for the last seven games [of last season], because in the last seven games it was not normal to accept the job in that condition," he says.

"So, first of all, I like to think I deserve to stay here, deserve to want the top players, because now Tottenham deserves to build a top team.

"Words ... they are not clear, but the facts are clear on the table. Now we have to bring top players to become competitive, I don't know if to win, but for sure to be better than the last two seasons' results in the Premier League.

"Then, I consider the trophy the end of the journey. I can't manage the end of the journey, I can manage the journey from the beginning until the end. And now is not the moment to think of the trophy. The trophy arrives if you, in this journey, have worked well, been your best version, and the players have been able to play in the best way they can."

Salah arrives in Turkey for talks with Trabzonspor

Paul Joyce
Northern Football Correspondent

Mohamed Salah is negotiating a lucrative free transfer to Trabzonspor and arrived in Turkey yesterday to continue discussions.

Trabzonspor publicly announced their pursuit of the former Liverpool attacker, 34, in a statement. Salah had previously been a target of Trabzonspor's Turkish Super Lig rivals Besiktas, while there had also been interest in him from the Saudi Pro League.

"Professional footballer Mohamed Salah, with whom we have begun transfer negotiations, will be at Istanbul Ataturk airport at 12pm on Wednesday," a statement from Trabzonspor said.

"The player is scheduled to arrive in Trabzon on the same day in the evening hours. The time and other details regarding the welcome programme in Trabzon will be shared with the public through our club's official communication channels during the day."

Salah has been searching for a club since informing Liverpool at the start of the year that he wanted to rip up the final 12 months of his contract and exit his £400,000-a-week deal.

The Egypt international claimed his relationship with Arne Slot, the head coach at the time, had broken down in a remarkable tirade when he was dropped from Liverpool's starting line-up last November/December and, despite returning to the team, his resentment at his treatment resulted in him pushing to leave. His exit was confirmed in March and he left in May after nine seasons on Merseyside.

On the surface, a move to Turkey, and to a team whose only league title since 1983-84 came four years ago, is at odds with Salah's own belief that he was made a scapegoat for Liverpool's decline last term. He scored 12 goals but was critical of the style of play under Slot and believes that adversely impacted upon his output.

Yet with his financial package high — reports in Turkey suggest he will earn €17 million (about £14.5 million) in each of his two seasons — the number of realistic suitors appears to have been restricted to a small pool.

Meanwhile, Liverpool have broadened their search for attacking reinforcements to Paris Saint-Germain's teenage winger Ibrahim Mbaye.

Interest in the Senegal international is separate to Liverpool's long-running pursuit of his club team-mate Bradley Barcola, although PSG's £145 million valuation of Barcola is proving problematic. As a result, the Anfield club are considering a number of options with Mbaye, 18, among those being studied.

Bayer Leverkusen hope to sign Mbaye, who is valued at about €40 million (£34.3 million) to €50 million (£42.9 million). Sources in France indicated that Mbaye would be attracted to moving to Anfield and his agent, Jorge Mendes, has strong links with the club's hierarchy.

Atletico battle Inter to sign £40m Romero

Tom Allnutt

Tottenham Hotspur's Cristian Romero is set to leave the club this summer for about £40 million, with Atletico Madrid and Inter Milan battling to sign the defender.

Inter have a broad agreement with Tottenham over a deal worth that amount including add-ons, but Atletico are confident the Argentinian would rather join them and are ready to make their move. Romero, 28, is open to playing in Serie A, but earns more than £150,000 a week at Tottenham, which would be a huge investment for Inter. Romero has also long been aware of Atletico's interest and has previously said his preference would be to move to Spain if Tottenham sanctioned his exit.

Atletico will have to match Inter's offer, but if they do, the expectation is Romero would prioritise the Spanish club, where he would also have the chance to play under his fellow Argentinian and the Atletico manager, Diego Simeone. Atletico withdrew their interest in Romero last year, when Tottenham's stance was they would only consider selling for a fee in line with some of the most expensive defenders in the world.

Instead, Romero signed a new four-year contract and was handed the captaincy by the then Spurs head coach, Thomas Frank. But another turbulent season for Romero, in which he missed seven games through suspension and publicly criticised the board, has convinced all parties a departure is the best solution this summer.

'Emotional' comeback for Mudryk

Ian Whittell

The Chelsea manager Xabi Alonso admitted it was "emotional" to welcome back Mykhailo Mudryk after a 20-month absence and successful appeal against a drugs ban in his team's 1-0 friendly defeat by Juventus in Hong Kong yesterday.

The 25-year-old Ukranian came on in the 82nd minute against the Italian side to a rapturous welcome from supporters and team-mates alike.

"Yes, for sure, I'm really pleased for him," said Alonso. "It was emotional for everyone from the club to see him back, especially when I told him that before the game that was my idea, that he could play ten-15 minutes.

"He was thrilled, for sure. After such a long period, to be back on the pitch, it was a great feeling for him and a great feeling for everyone as well."

Mudryk has not played since December 2024, having initially been banned for four years by the FA for returning an "adverse finding" for meldonium, only for the player to win an appeal last week.

Alonso claims no final decision has been made on where Mudryk will play this season, although Coventry City, managed by former head coach at Stamford Bridge Frank Lampard, and Chelsea's sister club Strasbourg, are known to be interested in a loan move.

There was also a Chelsea debut for striker Danny Welbeck against Juventus, with the 35-year-old playing the first half.

Sport

Matthew Syed

Poor Draper a victim of meat grinders who run elite sport

Column, page 57

Mike Atherton

England will struggle for balance without Stokes

Column, page 59

Infantino sorry – but will fight on

Fifa president offers Morocco 2030 World Cup final

EXCLUSIVE

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

Gianni Infantino is refusing to resign as Fifa's president despite widespread calls for him to quit but has apologised for "mistakes" in his plan to sell off stakes in the World Cup in a last-ditch attempt to survive.

The beleaguered Infantino, who was said by sources to have promised Morocco that it will host the 2030 World Cup final in return for its support, is digging his heels in despite Canada's prime minister, Mark Carney, saying the sell-off plan "should be fatal" for his future as Fifa president.

Infantino has been holed up in Rabat, Morocco, since the crisis broke. He has been trying to persuade countries to issue statements of endorsement but many have ignored the call. Saudi Arabia, for many years among his strongest backers and appointed as the hosts of the 2034 World Cup, have been conspicuous by their silence.

After a meeting with a number of staff members in Rabat, Infantino has written to Fifa Council members saying he wants to "restore confidence in the organisation".

The letter says: "In this context, we acknowledge mistakes were made in the process of the proposed establishment of Fifa Forward Enterprise (FFE).

"It was certainly not the intention for the Fifa Council and Fifa Member Associations to feel excluded from the process and it should have been handled differently. We acknowledge that errors were also made after the proposal was leaked to media.

"We sincerely apologise for these errors and commit to them not happening again. With this in mind, we will conduct a necessary review, and a report will be presented to the Fifa Council at its next scheduled meeting."

Infantino also issued veiled threats about criticism of Fifa.

The letter adds: "With the project withdrawn, Fifa will no longer tolerate any attacks on its integrity, good governance and due process and will take all necessary measures to protect and safeguard its name and reputation.

"There are always lessons to be learnt, and we will continue to improve our processes in light of this experience. In this instance, however, it is important to stress that, although mistakes were made, everything that was done, was done in full compliance with the Fifa regulatory framework."

Morocco has been Infantino's most loyal supporter since his election ten years ago and he rewarded the north African country by giving it co-hosting rights for the 2030 World Cup. However it has also been pushing to host the final in the new 115,000-seat Hassan II stadium in Casablanca, which will be the largest football stadium in the world when completed.

Sources have told The Times that

Continued on page 60

IMAGO/DEPO PHOTOS

Salah touches down in Turkey

Former Liverpool attacker, 34, negotiates two-year deal worth about £29 million with Trabzonspor, who finished third in Turkish league — full story, page 63

Fleming wants Hussey on staff

Elizabeth Ammon

Mike Hussey, the former Australia batsman, could become the batting coach for England's Test team after a formal approach from the new head coach, Stephen Fleming.

The pair have worked together for several years in the Indian Premier League, first as team-mates at Chennai Super Kings before Hussey joined Fleming's coaching team at the franchise. Fleming left his job as head coach of CSK last month which opened the door for him being appointed to the England job, but he will not take over officially until the tour to South Africa in December because he has family commitments. Marcus Trescothick will be in charge for the three Tests against Pakistan which start on August 19.

Hussey served as a consultant coach with England during their successful

Continued on page 59

Arsenal agree Guimarães deal

Martin Hardy
Northern Sports Correspondent

Arsenal are on the brink of signing Bruno Guimarães from Newcastle United after the London club altered the structure of their £75 million bid.

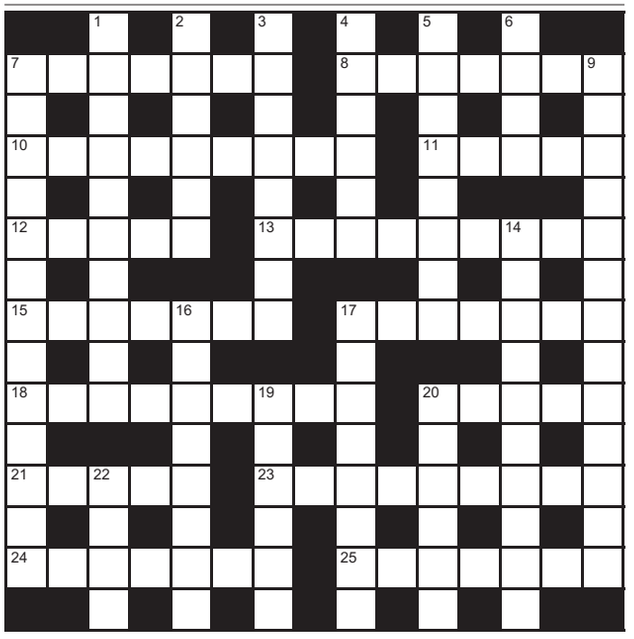
Newcastle are ready to accept a flat £75million fee after Arsenal's previous bid included add-ons to reach that figure. The fee will be paid over 24 months, helping Newcastle with Premier League spending rules and allowing them to invest money this summer to sign a replacement for their captain.

Arsenal's first formal bid on Sunday after a summer long chase was £69 million that would have potentially included £6 million in future add-ons.

That was rejected by Newcastle but The Times has learnt that fresh talks on Tuesday appear to have unlocked the

Continued on page 61

Times Crossword 29,614



ACROSS

7 Turning rather old, I note details of my life? (7)
8 Idolised one way or another (7)
10 Pepper with this wine's beginning to verge on spicy (9)
11 Come of age, wanting women's company (5)
12 You are against a second liaison? (5)
13 What helps broadcast short advert round state? (5,4)
15 Abettor agreeing partially about means of execution (7)
17 Use rent for refurbishing possessions provided by landlord? (7)
18 Where one could keep flask in bag (3,6)
20 Muse ultimately make obscure covers more melancholy (5)
21 Best available door, free from choice joiner (5)
23 Supplies item to facilitate tea making during school (9)
24 Fresher greeting German outside university by noon (7)
25 Service encountering this delays court action (3,4)

DOWN

1 Drunk tattoo artist splitting parish priest's mouth (6,4)
2 Rush job (6)
3 American runs hotel in inferior novel (3,5)
4 Regularly send bit they'd prepared for publication (6)
5 Man on throne (4,4)
6 Without drinks in boozer (4)
7 Significant work, essentially embracing completely the unknown? (3,4,6)
9 Reduced number of bars in Leeds opening late surprised Dicky (13)
14 It's primarily used on chair and is blown up (3,7)
16 Full as a result of eating nothing? (8)
17 Celebrated mathematician takes to teaching (8)
19 Drinks a lot of sake first (6)
20 Concerted effort to import new pancake (6)
22 Was coach on the radio stressed? (4)

Yesterday's solution 29,613

S	A	P	P	H	O	■	O	M	E	L	E	T	T	E
T	U	O	■	L	E	■	I	■	O	■	■	■	■	N
R	O	B	I	N	H	O	O	D	■	B	A	R	G	E
U	■	L	E	■	N	■	I	E	■	S	■	■	■	R
C	H	I	■	Y	O	G	I	C	■	F	L	Y	I	N	G
K	■	C	■	■	■	T	■	A	■	L	■	■	■	I
■	■	M	I	N	G	L	E	■	L	I	O	N	E	S	S
E	■	S	■	L	■	R	■	O	■	U	■	Y	■	E
L	I	T	H	I	U	M	■	F	A	S	T	E	R	■
E	■	■	S	■	M	■	F	■	■	O	■	S	■	■
V	E	N	U	S	D	E	M	I	L	O	■	P	O	P
A	■	O	A	■	M	■	C	■	L	■	E	■	E	■
T	E	N	O	N	■	O	B	E	D	I	E	N	C	E
O	■	E	D	■	R	■	V	■	E	■	C	■	■	■
R	E	T	R	O	N	Y	M	■	S	E	A	R	C	H

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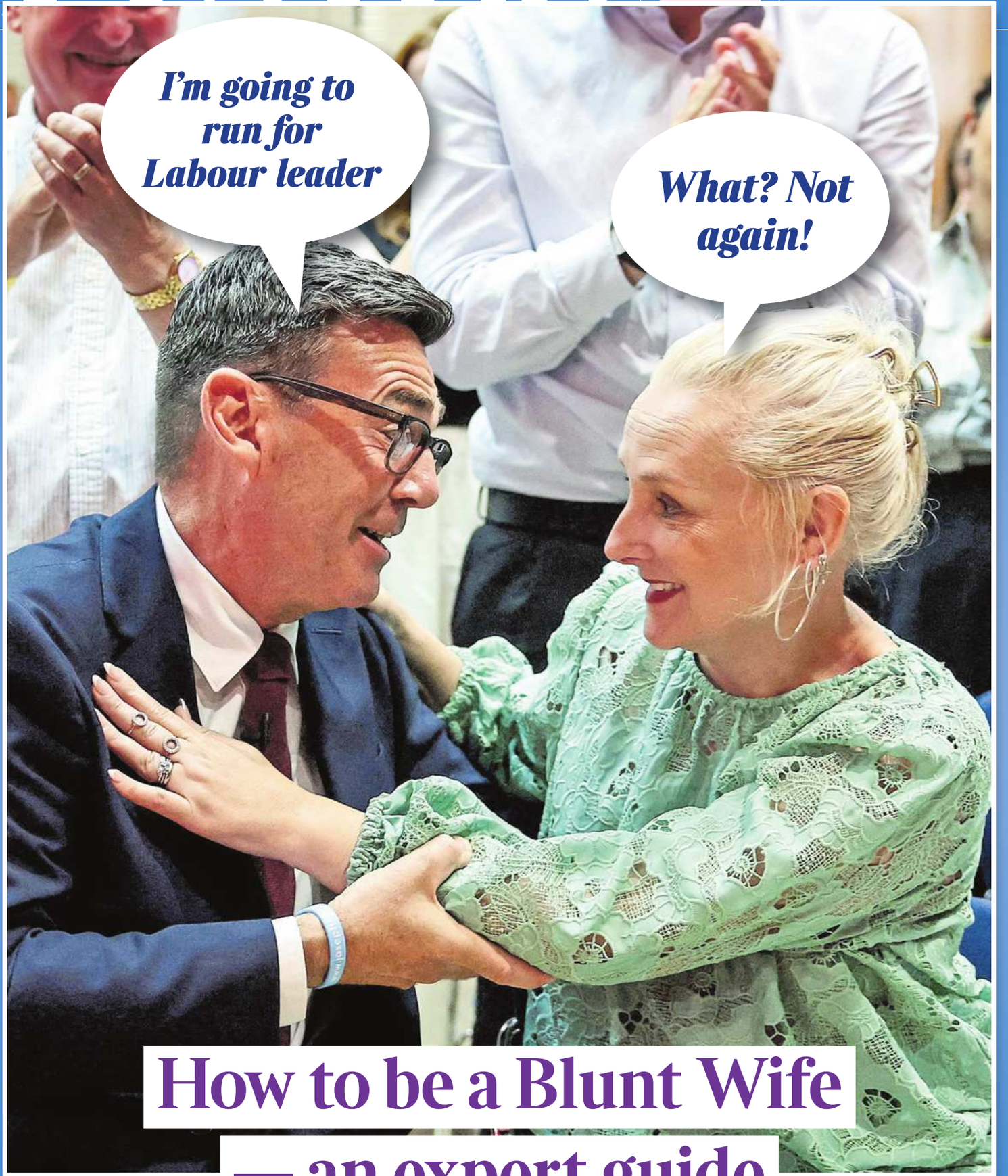
TIMES 2

August 6 | **2026**



How to be a Blunt Wife — an expert guide

tim

Caitlin Moran's Celebrity Watch

6 Huw Edwards

Good day, dearest Times reader. I'm afraid I kick off this week's business with news that will be difficult for all of us.

As we are all aware, in 2023 the former *BBC News at Ten* presenter Huw Edwards underwent an abject fall from grace. Pleading guilty to charges of receiving indecent images, Edwards was handed a suspended sentence, and the subsequent Channel 5 dramatisation of his case only compounded Edwards's reputational radioactivity.

Understandably, Edwards has been unemployed since. However, it's 2026, and if there's one thing we've learnt it's that while the internet exists, no one's career really needs to be over, so long as they're ready to be flexible. To think outside the box. Consequently, this spring Edwards began a Substack: a webpage where, as he puts it, the "journalist, broadcaster, author", posts "thoughts on politics, culture, mental health and criminal justice".

To be honest, the first few posts have been very obvious in their self-pitying undertones: there have been think pieces on judgment (Edwards thinks people do too much of it!), hatred (Edwards thinks people do too much of it!) and hypocrisy (Edwards — you get the gist.)

However, this week delivered a radical development. "For the first time in my life," Edwards wrote on Sunday, "I have attempted to write a poem. The poem is a personal tribute to my late father. And... it is written in Welsh."

I'm not sure if Edwards is abreast of how little market demand there is for former newsreaders to write poems, in Welsh, about their fathers. That he did not mention the length — there are 37 verses — suggests that, in fact, he is.

Helpfully, Edwards has provided an English translation. If I can be brutal enough to reduce it to its essence, the "sturdy peasantry" of the "ragbag nation" of Wales have been "damned" by "greedy, heedless farmers" and their "tragic, pitiful respect for the Saxon", which has made them "servile" and, seemingly, apt to take the concept of a service economy too far.

"Nor is it patriotic to pleasure the foreigner," Edwards warns — which is, obviously, a bad sentence for him to write.

As someone with full qualifications in armchair psychology I can supply a further translation into basic emotional subtext. In brief, the poem suggests Wales has been *so* traumatised by the Saxons, no wonder it produces "penitent", "self-destructive" sons "crying out for love". Who might, one day, be sex cases.

As we know, it's the hope of all first-time poets that their poetry is so good that the world murmurs, "Why didn't you tell us before that you're a poet? That means the normal rules don't apply to you! Now you've explained it all, in 37 verses, everything's fine. Have *News at Ten* back!"

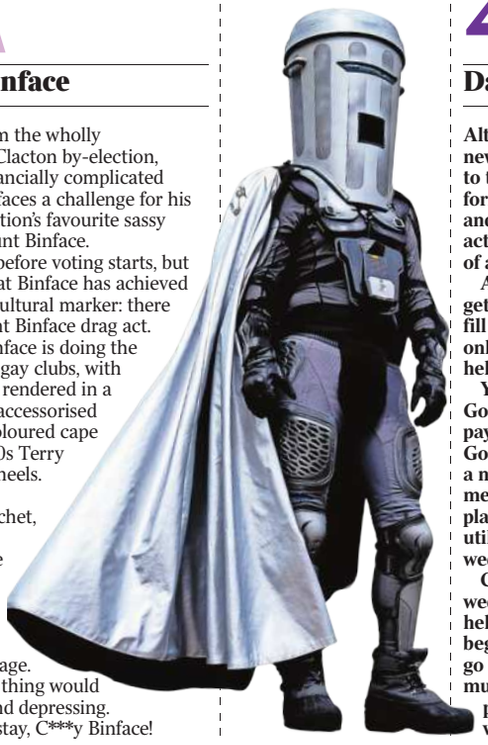
Alas, this has never ever happened, and Edwards's poem is not about to break that run. But it's good to know that "blaming the Saxons" is back on the board as an excuse for poor behaviour. Adjust your notes accordingly.

5 Count Binface

Hot news from the wholly unnecessary Clacton by-election, where the financially complicated Nigel Farage faces a challenge for his seat by the nation's favourite sassy bin-head, Count Binface.

It's a while before voting starts, but it's notable that Binface has achieved a significant cultural marker: there is now a Count Binface drag act. Yes, C***y Binface is doing the rounds in the gay clubs, with the "bin face" rendered in a glittery pink, accessorised with a rose-coloured cape and some 1970s Terry de Havilland heels.

In terms of soft-power cachet, this elevates Count Binface to the next level. No one is dressing up as a singing version of Farage. Seeing such a thing would feel sinister and depressing. Shantay, you stay, C***y Binface!



4 Danny Cipriani

Although there is more wedding news at this week's No 1, we turn first to the forthcoming nuptials of the former rugby player Danny Cipriani and his wife-to-be, the American actress AnnaLynne McCord, by way of an *amuse bouche*.

And what an *amuse* our *bouche* is getting! Let us turn to The Mirror to fill us in: "Danny Cipriani sets up online fundraiser and asks guests to help pay for his wedding".

Yes, that's right! The era of the GoFundMe — usually utilised to pay for operations or a David v Goliath legal battle — now enters a new phase where a key cast member of *90210* and the former players' player of the year are utilising it to pay for their fancy wedding!

Clicking onto the Cipriani-McCord wedding website, we found it helpfully displayed all the things the begging — I mean gifting — could go towards, including "reception music", "rehearsal dinner", "wedding photography" and "wedding venue construction".

For those inclined to google the net worth of the Cipriani-McCords — estimated between $8 million and $11 million— there may be some confusion over why exactly guests are being asked to stump up a communal $14k for their wedding. Particularly on discovering that McCord's engagement ring is "a massive 15-carat emerald-cut diamond, with seven round accent diamonds on each side of a yellow-gold band" — the kind of six-figure engagement ring that suggests you could pay for your own wedding after all!

Personally, I like this vibe. It seems to reveal a controversial truth: that soon-to-be-wed couples loathe their forthcoming festivities and that every ungrateful, freeloading guest *should* stump up some kind of tax, merely for the pleasure of being in a marquee for six hours with a bunch of overdressed, drunken strangers. You go, Cipriani-McCords! Punish those guests! It's the only way they'll learn the true cost of love!

3 Neil Amin-Smith

Andy Burnham's first three weeks of being prime minister have been a roaring success. His popularity has soared simply by "popping up on social media and announcing an upbeat new policy, albeit one that is quite vague and totally uncosted".

However, it seems that Burnham's radical reinvention of politics doesn't end there. For this week the chancellor, John Healey, appointed Neil Amin-Smith as senior special adviser to aid with the October budget. And this was notable because Amin-Smith is a) an ex-pop star who played violin in Clean Bandit and b) the first British political adviser who is genuinely good-looking.

There have been claims for various political figures being "actually quite hot". David Miliband, the young Margaret Thatcher, possibly even Tony Blair on a good day. Yet we can now see this was a Stockholm syndrome-like situation where, starved of any real contenders, Miliband, Thatcher and Blair looked hot in comparison to, say, Nicholas Soames or Michael Foot.

Now that someone a *normal* person would call "hot" is in Westminster we can admit: for more than 300 years there hasn't been one genuinely hot person in British politics. Until today. This *is* a new era. And it photographs very well.

2 Slipknot

The world of heavy metal is — contrary to its image — one that is largely peaceful. It seems there may be something emotionally cleansing about being in a band who make a ruddy horrible racket and shout/growl about Satan and such.

However, it seems there have been fractious times over in the world of Slipknot, the band behind such tunes as *Wait and Bleed*, *Death Because of Death* and *People = Shit*.

"Kelly Osbourne's ex-fiancé Sid Wilson 'permanently kicked out of Slipknot' four months after couple split", as The Sun headlined a story about Slipknot's keyboard player having parted ways with the band.

This news was enlivened by the fact that the members of Slipknot perform in masks — meaning the photos appeared to show Osbourne standing next to a very alarmed C3PO.

While I applaud The Sun for covering this dark day for metal, I cannot conceal my disappointment that it didn't headline the story "SlipNOT".

And this is why we know western civilisation is failing.

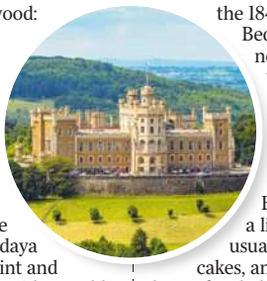
Tom Holland and Zendaya

This has been a red-letter week for romantics the world over, and for the British tourism board, as news has begun to leak of a forthcoming wedding celebration — held right here, in Blighty! — for the hottest couple in Hollywood: *The Odyssey* and *Spider-Man*'s Tom Holland and Zendaya.

To make things clear: Holland and Zendaya are already married. All the boring legal paperwork is done. As befits the two coolest young movie stars on the planet, Holland and Zendaya slipped away at some point and got hitched. The first the wider world knew of it was last month when Zendaya was spotted on a red carpet wearing a wedding ring.

Given the prolonged kerfuffle over Taylor Swift's wedding, which eventually brought much of Manhattan to a standstill, it's refreshing to see two famouses discreetly tootle off and get married without every showbiz podcaster having to suddenly cobble together an emergency broadcast that consists of absolutely nothing but lasts for several hours.

However. It seems the Holland/Zendaya wedding was *so* small and discreet there now needs to be a follow-up party so more than three people celebrate their union. And several press reports have it that it will be happening at "palatial" Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire, owned by the 11th Duke of Rutland.



I have to say, googling Belvoir Castle has been one of my greatest pleasures of 2026 so far. The castle's history stretches back a looooooong way (this is some real 1066 shit). Its story is sprinkled with the kind of words and phrases that, sadly, one just does not come across in day-to-day business. Check this: "A Norman castle originally stood on high ground, within the wapentake of Framland."

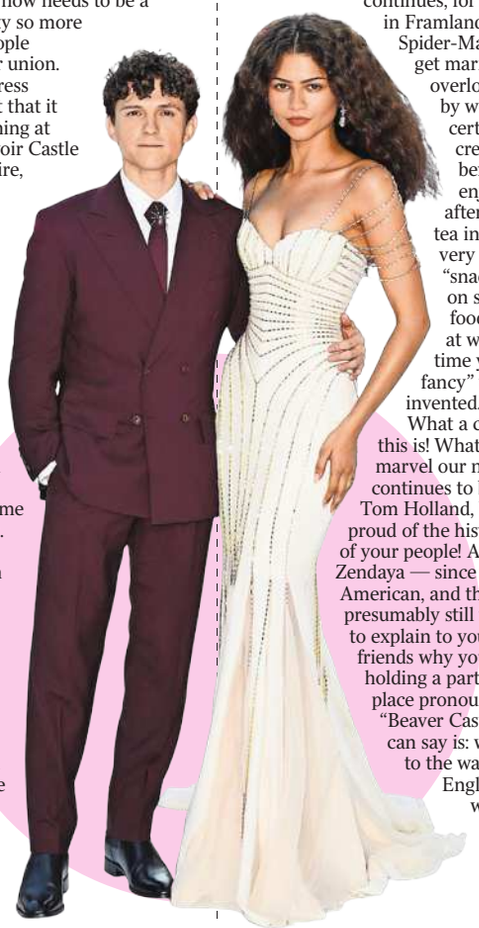
The wapentake of Framland! Wapentake! Framland! Who knew Framland existed? And that it had a wapentake? If anyone except David Olusoga says, "Yes I did," they're lying.

And, believe me, it has all been kicking off in the wapentake of Framland. "In 1267 Robert de Ros was granted a licence to crenellate." *A licence to crenellate*! The medieval James Bond film I now desperately want to see! Presumably some people in the wapentake were engaging in hooky crenellation — but de Ros wanted all his crenellating done by the book. Good man. And the ancient thrills don't end there.

"Whilst visiting Belvoir Castle in the 1840s Anna, Duchess of Bedford, found that the normal time for dinner was 8.30pm. The long afternoon had no refreshment at all and left people feeling hungry." What did Anna, Duchess of Bedford, do? "She found a light meal of tea — usually Darjeeling — and cakes, and sandwiches, was the perfect balance. Afternoon tea quickly become an established and convivial repast in many middle and upper-class households."

Yes, Belvoir Castle is so old that one of its inhabitants invented snacking. Why had no one invented snacking until that time? Because everyone else was too poor! They were just starving! It took Anna, Duchess of Bedford's well-resourced genius to invent "just having some cakes at 3pm for the hell of it".

I can't believe I've got to the age of 51 yet have been so ignorant about the centrality of Framland in our nation's history. And, obviously, it's one that continues, for soon in Framland a Spider-Man will get married overlooked by wholly certified crenellation before enjoying afternoon tea in the very place "snacking on surplus foodstuffs at whatever time you fancy" was invented.



What a country this is! What a marvel our nation continues to be! Tom Holland, be proud of the history of your people! And Zendaya — since you are American, and therefore presumably still trying to explain to your friends why you're holding a party in a place pronounced "Beaver Castle", all I can say is: welcome to the wapentake! England welcomes you!

Cate Blanchett had to have a 'hard word' with herself. Me too, Cate

Hilary Rose

Personal question: do you talk to yourself? Do you ever look in the mirror and have a stern word with your reflection about something? If so, rejoice — you're in excellent company. So does the Oscar-winning actress and all-round overachiever Cate Blanchett. So too does someone whose greatest achievement is planting a geranium and who last won an award in the Brownies: me.

In an interview with Harper's Bazaar Blanchett talked about how she gets four hours' sleep a night and how she "had a hard word" with herself about it, because four hours clearly isn't enough. She has to get up at 5am, you see, if she's going to fit in feeding the chickens, having a cold water plunge, walking the dogs and doing the school run, but she loves late nights when everyone else is in bed, and this leaves little time for sleep.

What I care about here isn't how much sleep she gets, it's that she deals with it by "having a hard word" with herself. I honestly thought nobody except me did that any more. I assumed it had been cancelled as a concept, possibly because when I was growing up people said it was the first sign of madness. I thought these days everyone outsourced imperfections to their therapist, or swerved them altogether as they reached for their gratitude journal, so hurrah for Blanchett, who doesn't.

I have a stern word with myself most days, about most things, because God knows somebody has to, and if not me then who? I can't afford a therapist. I think gratitude journals lie somewhere on the spectrum between cringe and self-indulgence, and no doubt a therapist could tell me why.

While we wait for that insight, I offer my latest list of things about which I have hard words with myself, in the hope that

they are not signs of madness but something else entirely. Obvious and treatable OCD, for example, or a low-level eating disorder, or perhaps simply idiocy. And if you know where having a hard word with yourself turns into "beating yourself up", do get in touch.

- I ask myself why I cut my fringe with kitchen scissors and, once, nail scissors. In spite of going to the best hairdresser money can buy, because my hair needs all the help it can get, I spend at least six months of the year with a wonky fringe.
- Why I haven't done more steps, and why literally everyone else in the whole world is apparently doing 10,000 a day except me.
- Crisps: why did I buy them? Why did God invent them?
- Why I haven't started weight training, in spite of reading thousands of words about how important it is for women my age. A Los Angeles-based friend said recently that she does it because she wants to be "dancing in the desert when she's 100", a prospect that fills me with horror. I don't even want to go to a desert, let alone dance in one. If I make it to 100 my aim is unlimited toast and hot Ribena by the fire. On the plus side, this seems compatible with not lifting weights.
- How I can tell myself that ordering a takeaway pizza is a treat, even though it's a treat I have every week. Closely related to: how much weight is it acceptable to gain before you do something about it? Blanchett believes that if you take responsibility for having done bad things you won't do them again, but she was talking about Brexit, not pizza.
- Why I developed a terrible evening iPad habit. My screen time report goes up and up because scrolling mindlessly on it when I get home from work seems to have replaced doing something useful, but when a friend asked, "Such as?" I drew a blank. This prompted soul-searching.

> **The last deep thought I had was probably about lip gloss**

- Why, unlike Blanchett, I cannot casually reference Greek tragedy and the vengeful daughter of Agamemnon in conversation. This is partly because I didn't know that Agamemnon had a daughter, vengeful or otherwise. Mainly, though, it's because my thoughts turn more naturally to *Bridgerton*.
- Why Cate Blanchett thinks deeply about the dangers of AI and climate change but the last deep thought I had was in 1991 and it was probably about lip gloss. Must do better.
- Why chablis is reliably nicer on a sunny Friday night than cranberry and soda. Also, who buys those incredibly expensive non-alcoholic spirits that taste like a hedge?

Fish fingers: which side are you on?

Leaving Blanchett to AI and the future of humanity, my thoughts turn to fish fingers. Birds Eye has asked its customers how they slice their fish finger sandwiches, and a majority, 32 per cent, turned out to be savages: they slice vertically, straight down the middle.

The company helpfully provided a photograph of what a vertically sliced sandwich looks like and the answer is horrifying. Everything clenches. Not since Liz Truss on the steps of No 10 have I seen something so obviously wrong.

It is scant comfort that only 1 per cent fewer voted for horizontally, which is quite obviously the correct answer, since that is how I cut mine. We will draw a veil over the deviants who cut theirs into triangles, while marvelling at the dexterity of the 11 per cent who don't cut at all.

If Easter is about how you eat a Creme Egg, summer is about sandwiches: how do you slice yours?

The joy of being a 'soft hermit'

Tired of hanging out in humid pub gardens? So is Charlie Gowans

Have you recently cried off from a night at the pub with friends? Remained silent when someone in the group chat suggested buying festival tickets? Slunk out of the office to avoid after-work pints, pretended not to spot an acquaintance in the supermarket? Congratulations, you're "soft hermitting", the latest trend to come from Gen Z.

It's a hashtag on TikTok, and according to a survey of 2,000 Gen Zers and millennials by RiseGuide (an app that targets doom-scrolling), 32 per cent had gone between one and three days without talking to another person during the past year.

Which sounds like a weekend well spent to me. Gen Z may have started the trend but this isn't new behaviour. The difference now is the hot summer weather — things used to get rained off, giving us all a break. When the sunshine stretches out for weeks there's pressure not to waste it indoors.

"At school I skipped social occasions — birthday parties, bowling nights — for a year

But if no one wants to hang out, is that a bad thing?

As a millennial I am used to being out of date when it comes to Gen Z trends, but for once I truly am an early adopter. At school I earned the nickname Hermit when I skipped every social occasion — birthday parties, bowling nights — for a year. Yes, I was later prescribed antidepressants, but a few decades on and my hermitting is born of pure joy. Instead of spending them in a pub garden, the past few weeks have been passed drinking wine on my balcony, roasting a chicken then making broth with the bones, walking 30,000 steps on London's canals, clearing out my wardrobe, reading a book in the park, getting a deep-tissue massage, repainting my hallway, browsing an antique centre, visiting the Barbican. I live alone, so there was no accidental socialising. Occasionally you *would* have found me in a pub garden, but by myself, late-afternoon and midweek, to avoid the risk of bumping into someone I know.

I have a holiday with friends at the end of August, so I am stockpiling my social battery: so far there's not a single social plan in my calendar for the next three weeks (and I'm staying on for five solo nights after to recover). I can't recommend hermitting highly enough — although perhaps I'd recommend that you stop short of admitting to it in The Times.

Like Mrs B, I'm a Blunt

When he proposed a tilt at No 10, Andy Burnham's wife was brutally honest with him. Wish you were as frank? Here's how.

By Shane Watson

Andy Burnham and his wife, Marie-France van Heel

Marie-France van Heel is only a couple of weeks into the job of PM's wife but so far we are very much liking her style. Wives and partners come in two broad categories, the pleasers and the plain speakers, and we already know Mrs Burnham is firmly in the latter camp — which is exactly where you would want a PM's wife to be.

Burnham told the *How to Fail* podcast that when he announced he was going to throw his hat in the ring for the big job his wife's response was: "What? Not again?" Then she went on to say: "They told you twice they don't want you. Why are you doing it again?" The pleaser in this scenario would have dug their nails into their palms, smiled brightly and said: "Oh, darling, that's wonderful. I'm right behind you." The plain speaker tells it like it is because they know no other way and their partner expects it — relies on it — to keep him on the straight and narrow. Mrs B has always been his bluntest critic, according to Burnham, and clearly he wouldn't have it any other way. That's also very promising.

On the same podcast Burnham recalled emerging from interviews believing that he had performed well, only to switch on his phone and find a message from his wife in capital letters that read: "ANSWER THE F***ING QUESTION". If you're a pleaser, this will no doubt horrify you. If you're a Blunt Wife you'll be extremely encouraged and relieved that the

"It's our job to hover by the cooker, saying: 'It's burning'

prime minister has a hard-headed BW at his back, one who will make him do his best, to quote Cat Stevens's song, and who will not allow him to blindly toe the party line (that was her complaint about the interviews), or to forget he is not the Messiah, or to start to believe his own press. For this we should be grateful. Nothing against pleasers but let's just say if Mr Liz Truss had been more of a BW and less of an enabler we might not be having those endless mortgage conversations with our adult children.

Meanwhile, IRL the rest of us who are proud to call ourselves BWs are busy doing our own bit to keep our menfolk on track — albeit that our job is not so important. Note: Blunt Wifery is not to be confused with Raging Wife syndrome. BWs are our husband's number one fans, which is what allows us to be unsparing with the truth, with a few notable exceptions (see below). A BW's husband must know you 100 per cent respect him, otherwise you'll be in the divorce courts by Christmas.

If you're considering switching sides and wondering how to go about it in the right spirit, this is how we roll.

Communication

Between BWs and their husbands communication is not an issue, as we've established, but it probably will be in all other areas of your husband's life. His friend is out of hospital but he's not sure if he should ring him just yet. His nephew is getting divorced but he probably won't want to talk about it. His boss's mother died last week but she's quite a private person so... in all these scenarios the BW says: "Just pick up the phone, you weirdo!" Some BWs may have to go so far as dialling for them and putting the phone down in front of them while mouthing, "Ask about Jan! Tell him you miss him! Find out when he wants to see you."

Cooking

All husbands and partners hate being interfered with when they have decided to cook "something Ottolenghi" (code for using 14 ingredients and eating at 10.30pm). Blunt Wife knows that, for the sake of everyone, the cook must be challenged and it's our job to hover by the cooker murmuring, "It's burning... that's the smell of burning... you need to turn that down," and, "That's not basil, it's sage," and, "The reason you can't zest that lemon is because it's waxed." This

Wife. Are you?

COVER: HENRY NICHOLLS/REUTERS. BELOW: ANDREW MILLIGAN/PA

is no fun and you will be accused of being a controlling pain in the arse (note: in the BW marriage there's a whole repertoire of so-called offensive language that others might find alarming, but we find therapeutic). Then (this is the mildly tricky part) when your guests have gone and he says, "So was the food really OK?" (it tasted like charred grasshoppers) the BW must stay strong and reply something like, "Yes... but maybe a bit too much lemon." He knows there was too much lemon, so don't make it worse by lying. Also don't say: "I told you to lay off the lemon but would you listen? You never listen. Poor Jerry was practically gagging."

Getting dressed to go out

In my experience, men gradually catch up with women in the getting-dressed panic stakes and then overtake us and start to torture themselves about trainer styles, and shirt in or out, and belt on or off, and the number of buttons to undo if the weather's hot. This is a sensitive area because we appreciate that no one wants to be told they look like an Austrian dentist just before they leave the house. Then again, of course they want to be alerted if they have accidentally got themselves up like an Austrian dentist. The best policy, as ever, is bluntness but beautifully timed. You've got to catch them before they've decided they look pretty good. You need to creep up on them and say: "Oh. I thought you were going to wear something else on top. Why don't you wear the other thing on top?" If you are met with a mildly panicked "What's wrong with this?" go straight to "It's less summery". If he's looking for the full BW — and he knows the rules as well as you do — give it to him straight: "You look like an Austrian dentist but I think it's mainly the gilet."

Haircuts

The one area where a BW has to bite her tongue, initially, because hair is everything. Try and book a couple of days away so you don't have to look him in the eye when he says: "Is this OK? I went to that new place next to the office." Ideally, avoid any contact until he's forgotten he had a haircut

> You have to be brutal with their shopping habits

and then, when he's next considering a haircut, feel free to tell him that if he goes back to that place you're leaving him. Note: this is a good example of why the tough-love BW is better for their partners than the pleaser. A pleaser allows her partner to think his haircut was really great and he'll go straight back for another savaging, none the wiser.

Shopping

You have to be brutal with their shopping habits. "Why have you ordered a 10kg bag of dog food when we own a miniature dachshund?" "How come this is *gloss* paint and how did it end up being cobalt blue when we need off-white? *Look* at the *colour*." Your mother would say, "Aw, he's doing his best," but you're a BW and your job is not to treat your husband like the work experience. He can do better.

Messaging

That "answer the f***ing question" will surely remind BWs everywhere of all the times they've sent an urgent message to their partners. Just a handful of recent personal examples: "Where are the f***ing car keys?" "Your phone isn't on ring AGAIN!" "I'm in the Co-op car park! I'm still in the Co-op car park! Where are you?" "What have you done with the remote?" "Why is my cashmere jumper in the f***ing washing machine?" I suppose if you're a pleaser you wait until they get home, pour them a nice cool drink and then... actually, just can't picture it.

Why women like me are tired of playing it cool

It's the first rule of being single — act nonchalant. But now I crave transparency. And I'm not alone, says Lucy Sarret

GEMMA DAY FOR THE TIMES

Lucy Sarret

For the past two years of navigating the London singles market I have religiously followed the golden rule of modern courtship: under no circumstances must you show you care.

We all know the script. To be successful is to be nonchalant. You must treat a five-hour text reply window as a human right, view emotional vulnerability like a game of chicken and maintain an aura of cool detachment so profound you appear practically comatose.

After all, I grew up on the gospel of the classic "three-day rule" — the sacred directive popularised by the 1996 comedy *Swingers* to wait 72 hours before calling, or texting, after a date, lest you risk looking desperate. Noughties rom-coms such as *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* and *He's Just Not That Into You* hammered home the lesson: to show eagerness is to alienate, enthusiasm is embarrassing, and pretending you couldn't care less is the only way to make someone chase you.

But frankly, I am exhausted. And it seems I am not alone. Across social media and dating apps young adults are exhibiting a collective fatigue for "playing it cool" and are actively reclaiming sincerity, with a massive new movement championing being explicitly "chalant".

To be "chalant" is, quite plainly, the opposite of being nonchalant — proudly embracing the fact that things do matter, you do have expectations and you are unapologetically invested. It is the art of playing it warm. According to a report by the dating app Hinge, searches for the term "chalant" skyrocketed by 217 per cent last year, with users openly filtering for matches who will chase them.

Intellectually, I crave this romantic transparency. I am tired of the duck-pond stagnation of modern dating. Yet when put into practice my ingrained conditioning presents a psychological hurdle: the moment someone is keen I panic.

I'll admit that my friends think I am quick to cut people off, and I have never once said "I love you" first. My last boyfriend confessed that he spent the first three months of our relationship unsure if I liked him. Science suggests such nonchalance works. A 2020 study found that appearing selective rather than overly available makes us seem more desirable.

The chase is fun but it leaves me trapped in a romantic paradox: I need to know they like me before I can open up, but if they like me too quickly I distrust it and/or lose interest.

Case in point: my friends and I recently discussed a match who texted me a few hours after leaving our first date to say he'd loved meeting me and wanted to lock in a dinner the next week. As any sane, well-adjusted person would find, my immediate response was a mild existential crisis. "He seems way too keen," I explained to my friends. "He's obviously love-bombing me." They simply asked: "Do you just not like him that much, or are you trying to find an excuse?"

> My friends think I'm quick to cut people off, and I have never once said 'I love you' first

They had a point. As the relationship therapist and sexologist Sofie Roos tells me, "To pretend you don't care that much even when all you want is to be with this very person is a way to keep your guard up, which to many feels less vulnerable compared to exposing your heart. However, there's a significant difference between being selective and pretending not to care when liking someone, where the latter makes you come off as emotionally unavailable."

We complain endlessly about the emotionally unavailable people who breadcrumb us yet we penalise the sweet ones who are forthright with their feelings. We are put off if they text too much, and if they text too little. Surely there is someone out there who can text me just the right amount? (Is it really that hard?)

Reclaiming my "chalance" means unlearning those rules. Dating with intent is scary but wasting three months in an ambiguous situationship because you are both too terrified to admit you care is worse.

"To stop with the games when being into someone and instead being honest with your intentions reduces the risk for misunderstandings and makes dating more adult and stable," Roos says. "It's about being able to say 'I like you' without losing yourself, and to be able to take a no even if you haven't hidden your true feelings."

So, consider this my official retirement from the nonchalant era. I care, I'm available and I book up quickly. If you want to take me out, make a reservation — and please, do not wait three days to tell me you had a nice time.

Ah non! We moved to France but I did not expect my kids to be so French

After emigrating in 2019 Alix O'Neill wanted her children to assimilate. She didn't anticipate just how completely they'd embrace the Gallic way of life

Buuuut! Crossing his hands over his chest and tucking them underneath his armpits, my six-year-old assumes Kylian Mbappé's signature victory move. My husband, Dex, and I look on in bewilderment. How did it come to this? Neither of us has the slightest interest in football. And rooting for France in the World Cup? *C'est pas possible.*

It was inevitable this day would come, I suppose. Every Six Nations our boys have a hard time deciding who to support in the rugby: Ireland, where Dex and I were born and bred, or France, their adopted homeland. Often William, eight, claims neutrality to avoid offending his parents. By nature his younger brother, Sasha, is less desirous to please. One year, to punish us for denying him dessert, he announced he wanted England to win.

When we emigrated to southwest France in 2019 after a 12-year stint in London we hadn't considered that we'd end up raising French boys. There were multiple reasons for our decision to move, including Brexit fatigue and wanting a more affordable, laid-back lifestyle. Mainly, Dex and I were suckers for all things Gallic. I was born on Bastille Day and holidayed in France as a kid. Once you get a taste of public firework displays on your birthday it's hard to look back. Dex, who spent a lost summer on the Côte d'Azur during his university years, needed little persuading. The clincher was a trip to Aix-en-Provence in 2015. Downing rosé in a shady square, we sat next to a chic family, the children immaculately attired, their table manners faultless. I nudged Dex. *That will be us someday.*

As Gen Z say in cases of extreme hilarity, "I'm dead." Most days I'm scrubbing mud and unidentified foodstuffs off various items of clothing, while my sons view cutlery as table decoration. I don't mind. I love being a boy mum, the physicality of it. I'm constantly being climbed on and hollered at, revelling in a boisterousness that parenting *à la française* traditionally frowns upon.

That said, we recently made the decision to apply for French nationality. Although Sasha was born here he is not entitled to birthright citizenship until he is 18. If we naturalise the boys become French too. (France permits dual nationality, so our Irishness will remain intact.)

> **"Romantic love is ingrained in the culture. Every day I'm given an update on who's amoureux with whom**

The reason for making it official now? Despite our best efforts — eg forcing them to watch *Riverdance* every St Patrick's Day to remind them of the talent of the motherland — our boys feel French at heart. Sasha has all the mannerisms of a true *Tarnais*. At the market he'll listen to the cheesemonger grumble over pension reform and, in sympathy, sigh through puffed-up cheeks and mutter an appropriate swearword. He devotes his free time to his *musculation*, sculpting his baby biceps with my 3kg dumbbells. It's a display of machismo he certainly didn't inherit from his father, whose gym bag has spent more nights on the floor of pubs than in changing-room lockers.

Should I be concerned by this obsession with physical strength as a sign of masculinity? Years after MeToo sexism remains rife in France — last year a parliamentary report revealed that sexual violence, harassment and bullying are systemic in the country's entertainment industry. Another official survey detected a male backlash to the movement across French society.

Ultimately, I'm not sweating it. It's easy to get hung up on hypotheticals. True, France is less evolved when it comes to sexual politics, but I don't worry about raising the next Andrew Tate. In fact, Sasha's dedication to improving his form has inspired me to up my fitness game.

As for William, he has less earthy but equally Gallic traits. He craves beauty in the everyday and has a fondness for the melodramatic. When he's not writing stories or making comic books he's musing on the meaning of life. While his creative sensibilities may frustrate teachers back home, here the artist is still very much revered. Any time he forgets his homework or leaves the house with his T-shirt on back to front his teacher smiles indulgently and assures me all is well. He is, simply, *un petit rêveur*.

Although their temperaments differ, both boys are well versed in affairs of the heart. French children are fixated on relationships. How could they not be? Romantic love is ingrained in the culture. Every day I'm given an update on who is *amoureux* with whom. Huddled around the kitchen table, a group of six and eight-year-olds will compare notes, extolling the joys of a well-made match, commiserating with one another on a love unrequited. I went to an all-girls convent school and knew well not to bring boy troubles to my no-nonsense Northern Irish mother. In France this kind of behaviour is actively encouraged by the parents. There's a coquettishness among French girls that I haven't witnessed in my Anglophone friends' daughters, while one of the mums in William's class speaks earnestly of marriage between her child and the boy who sits beside her. Once I mooted the idea that it's a bit silly, is it not, all this romance stuff? The boys could barely hide their disdain. What is more important than love, William demanded to know.

I dunno. Sustenance? I've two budding gourmets on my hands. Though neither is particularly fond of cheese (*sacré bleu!*) Sasha appreciates an aged Comté and has correctly identified many a secondary aroma when sniffing the local wine in his father's glass. More of a bread man, William can immediately tell an artisan baguette from a Carrefour offering. It's a far cry from the Findus Crispy Pancakes of my childhood.

One of my children's most French qualities is their approach to *jeux de société*. We Anglophones tend to jump straight into board games, winging it as we go along. For the Frenchman it's all about strategy. The boys will spend an hour in deep pregame analysis, which, if you recall your Second World War history, is no guarantee of success. (The French spent so long building their elaborate Maginot Line they failed to plan for the Germans advancing through Belgium.)

To be fair to the kids, their tendency to overthink things is hardly surprising. They've been in the system from an early age. The year we emigrated Macron made school mandatory from the age of three. Rules and structure are all they've known. This, incidentally, is one of the criticisms of French parenting: that it is inflexible and intolerant, with an unhealthy focus on compliance. This year the state rail company barred children under 12 from some business-class carriages. The spread of adults-only spaces has started a culture war, with left-wing and centrist politicians demanding new legislation to ban them.

We've experienced this old-school approach to bringing up *bébé*. Although smacking was outlawed in 2019 it is not uncommon to see French parents raise their hand to their children. Among older generations there remains an expectation for children to rein in their natural exuberance. At a family restaurant on William's sixth birthday a woman admonished us for ruining her meal. She told me the boys and their friends (who had remained seated and well behaved) were *mal élévé* and that she had been left with no choice but to cancel her dessert order.

At the same time we've noticed a creeping Americanisation of French

MATTHIEU RONDEL/HANS LUCAS FOR THE TIMES

Alix O'Neill and her sons, William and Sasha

parenting in recent years: extravagant birthday parties, a more laissez faire attitude to discipline and an increasing reliance on junk food. I'm a source of amusement among the school mums for my refusal to let the boys have sweets or sugary drinks. Halloween has taken off in a big way. When we arrived you were lucky to find a pumpkin in the supermarkets. Now trick or treating is celebrated in every town, with local shop owners stocking up on Haribo for tiny revellers.

Whatever side of the divide you're on, *la politesse* is key. Forget "please" and "thank you" — *bonjour* and *au revoir* are the bedrock of French civility. Should your offspring neglect to utter these words on entering or leaving a shop they'll be dismissed as savages.

It has been a balancing act trying to fit into French life while staying true to our core family values. We've gone to great pains to assimilate into the culture. We vote in local elections, are on the PTA at school, take the boys litter-picking when the *mairie* requests volunteers. And yet there are occasions when I'll insist on doing things the Anglophone way.

Saying sorry when you're in the wrong (a rare occurrence over here), being effusive in my praise of the boys, not taking life too seriously. The other day Sasha recounted the time he was scolded by a woman in the *boulangerie* for hiding his toy spider among the croissants. "She was no craic, Mummy," he lamented. Dex and I looked at one another in relief. They may pass as French boys, but their sense of humour? That's all Irish.

Pancreatitis — how great is the risk of weight-loss medication?

A fatal incident raises questions about GLP-1 drugs. Peta Bee reports

Weight-loss drugs come with information about unpleasant gastrointestinal side-effects — nausea, constipation and vomiting — that most users consider to be worth tolerating for the bodily transformations. There are also prominent warnings about more severe potential complications, particularly pancreatitis. But as GLP-1 agonist medications have skyrocketed in popularity, so have reports of more serious illness in some of those who use them.

This week a Norfolk coroner's court heard that Caroline Savage, 73, died at home two years ago after her pharmacist advised increasing the dose of her Mounjaro (tirzepatide) weight-loss medication to a maximum 10mg once she had been taking it for four months. Her cause of death was faecal peritonitis, when faecal matter leaks into the abdominal cavity, which can be a rare side-effect of pancreatic inflammation that may or may not be linked to the drugs she had been prescribed privately.

Data submitted to the UK drugs regulator and published in the BMJ last year suggested that up to January 31, 2025, there were 22 deaths from adverse reactions associated with use of GLP-1 agonists taken for weight-loss purposes. Vicky Price, president-elect of the Society for Acute Medicine, expressed concern that "patients are taking these medications without properly understanding the potential risks involved or the importance of using these as part of supported weight-loss programmes".

Duane Mellor, a registered dietician and honorary associate professor of nutrition at the University of Leicester, says that anyone considering using the drugs should ensure they have good medical support.

"It is not yet known whether serious side-effects are directly related to GLP-1 use," Mellor says. "Any change in weight, through diet or drugs, is not without side-effects, but people should make sure they are supervised when using them."

How vigilant do you need to be when upping a dose?

Doses of GLP-1 injections typically start at 0.25mg weekly, which is gradually increased over several months until a higher sustained dose of 2.4mg each week is reached. If needed, some adults with clinical obesity are offered a maximum dose increase to 7.2mg a week after a minimum of four weeks on 2.4mg. This gradual approach is critical and should always be overseen by a medical professional. "It allows prescribers to check for and manage symptoms at each stage," Mellor says. "It also means that doses are tailored for adequate individual weight loss as not everyone is the same."

Anyone prescribed GLP-1 medication on the NHS will be tracked, but those who buy weight-loss drugs privately or online may not have the same level of support, so should proceed cautiously. Always make sure that medication purchased online is dispensed by a registered pharmacy.

How great is the risk of pancreatitis?

Acute pancreatitis, extreme inflammation of the pancreas — an organ that sits behind the stomach and aids digestion — is a rare but real risk for 0.2 to 1 per cent of people taking some GLP-1 agonist drugs.

"Rapid weight loss by any means, including extreme dieting or medication, will raise the risk of pancreatitis and gallstones," Mellor says. "It's not always a direct effect of the drugs alone, but people do need to be aware of the symptoms."

When weight is lost quickly, the liver is forced to release excess cholesterol into bile, forming gallstones that can block the pancreatic ducts. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) says symptoms include extreme pain in the stomach and back that doesn't go away.

"Gallstones tend to cause pain in the sides whereas pancreatitis radiates to the back and may cause vomiting, especially when you bend over," Mellor says. "Speak to a healthcare professional immediately if concerned."

Most people recover from the condition within about a week, but if ignored it can lead to complications including necrosis, when pancreatic tissue dies off, or even organ failure.

What about other serious side-effects?

According to the MHRA, hypoglycaemia (very low blood sugar) can occur in non-diabetic people taking the medication and more than one in ten people experience vomiting or diarrhoea, which can result in dehydration. If dehydration is severe, it raises the risk of more serious consequences such as kidney damage, "which may result in hospitalisation", the agency says. According to a recent study of nearly 150,000 people presented at the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons' annual meeting, people taking weight-loss drugs may also face a significantly higher risk of skeletal disorders, including osteoporosis and ruptured tendons, than non-users. A report in the New England Journal of Medicine expressed concern that some people could develop eating disorders with long-term use of the drugs.

"Since the drugs affect how the stomach digests food, it impacts how some nutrients are absorbed," Mellor says. "There's a risk of B12 and iron deficiency, resulting in fatigue and potential anaemia."

Are there other underlying health conditions that mean weight-loss drugs might not be a good idea?

Due to the potential links between weight-loss drugs and pancreatic inflammation, anyone with a history of pancreatitis should undergo a thorough evaluation before being prescribed the drugs, as should those with cardiovascular conditions, such as angina, gallbladder disease, compromised liver function or kidney problems.

Anyone with a personal or family history of thyroid cancer or tumours should discuss with their GP before taking the drugs and anyone with diagnosed eating disorders should not be prescribed weight-loss medication. If you take any other prescribed medication, particularly warfarin and anticoagulants, thyroid drugs or insulin, there's a risk of adverse interactions so discuss with your doctor first.

Is microdosing a better idea?

Drip-feeding smaller than recommended doses of GLP-1 injections over the course of a week is an "off-label" trend that's become popular with those wanting just enough of the drugs to sustain weight loss. There is no evidence that it's safe and it is not recommended by UK regulatory bodies or the NHS.

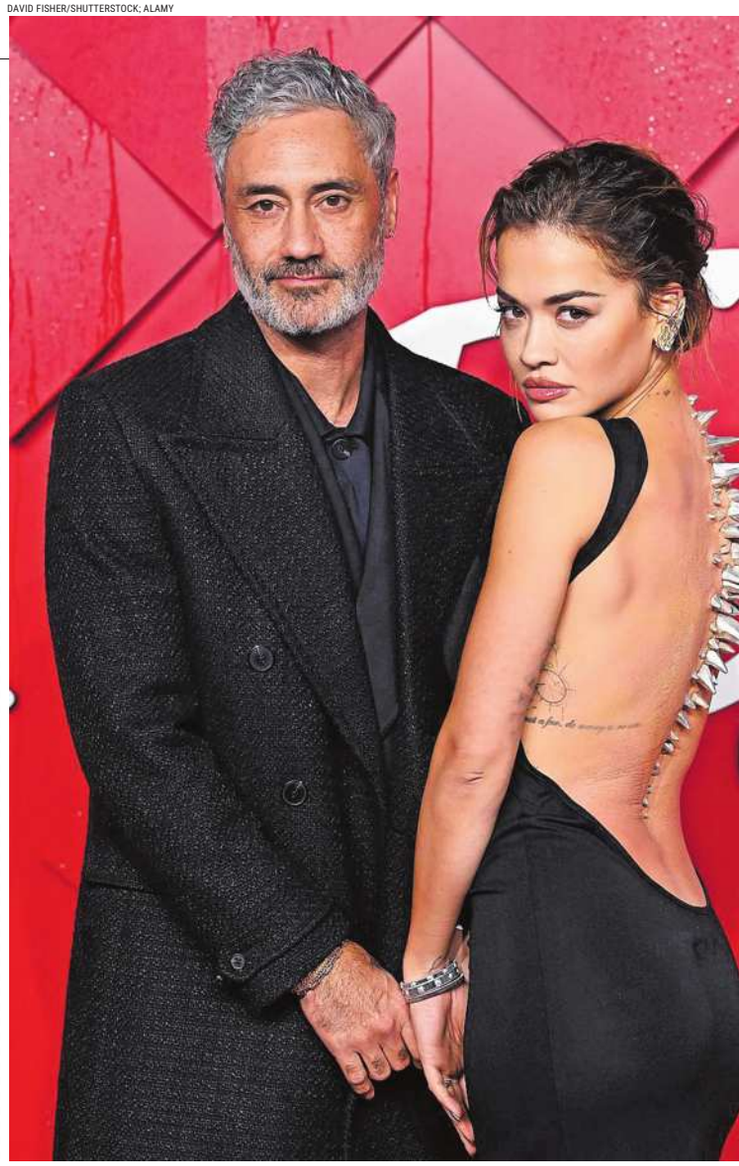
"As professionals we can't recommend microdosing because there are risks associated with inaccurate doses and with reusing a single-use needle each week," Mellor says. "A lot of patients do their own thing when the drug is in their hands and we can't control that, but microdosing is not without risk."

arts

‘Rita and I are going to make a romantic comedy together’

The Oscar-winning director Taika Waititi tells Ed Potton about working with Sam Neill, his new film and how his pop star wife changed his taste in movies

DAVID FISHER/SHUTTERSTOCK; ALAMY



Taika Waititi is mooching at home in Auckland, dressed in a pink hoodie, sipping hot water and lemon and telling me about his teeming diary. “I think Rita and I are going to make a rom-com together,” he says. That’s his wife, the pop star Rita Ora — more on her later. He has also “been producing a new film-maker, Victor Gabriel, in LA”, referring to Gabriel’s movie *The Incredible Heist of Hallelujah Jones*. Then there’s *Very Young Frankenstein*, a TV prequel spin-off of *Young Frankenstein*. “That’s another new film-maker, called Mel Brooks,” Waititi says with a hint of a smile. Brooks, who directed *Young Frankenstein* in 1974, recently turned 100.

Julian Dennison and Sam Neill in Hunt for the Wilderpeople. Right: Taika Waititi with his wife, Rita Ora

Waititi and Brooks met in 2020 at a lunch in Los Angeles before the Oscars, where the former was nominated for *Jojo Rabbit*, his comedy about a ten-year-old Hitler Youth member whose imaginary friend is Adolf Hitler, played by Waititi. The film, which the New Zealander wrote, directed and co-produced, won him the Oscar for best adapted screenplay a few days later. “Mel made a really nice speech about *Jojo Rabbit* and about how it was right in line with what they were trying to do with *The Producers*,” says Waititi, 50, referring to Brooks’s equally controversial movie about a musical called “Springtime for Hitler”. “Mel made a joke: ‘You didn’t ask me for permission to play Hitler.’”

Very Young Frankenstein, on which the two of them are executive producers, with Zach Galifianakis starring, is “really, really funny”, Waititi promises. “I’m so happy with how it turned out, because you get a bit nervous when you’re trying to take such a beloved property and bring it into the world in a new way. There’s always some charming person on the internet who’s going to be like, ‘Don’t touch it. It’s my favourite thing in the world.’ You’ll still have the original thing, no one’s forcing you to replace it with this.”

> “Sam Neill named a pig after me. I checked how it was and he said, ‘Oh, he was delicious’

***Hunt for the Wilderpeople* is in selected cinemas from tomorrow**

It’s telling that he is trusted by titans such as Brooks and Kazuo Ishiguro, the British Nobel laureate whose book *Klara and the Sun* Waititi has adapted for his next film. But then he is one of the most original minds in movie-making. Smart, funny, playful and versatile, he leapt in a few years from breakout Kiwi comedies such as *Flight of the Conchords* and the vampire mockumentary *What We Do in the Shadows* to writing and directing mega-budget *Thor: Ragnarok* and *Thor: Love and Thunder* for Marvel. His football comedy *Next Goal Wins* (2023) was a rare misstep.

What links his projects is what he calls “comedy of the mundane”, a deadpan bathos that’s quintessentially Kiwi. Think of Chris Hemsworth’s Thor hanging upside down on a twisting chain but having to turn a full revolution before he can speak. “The more boring it is the more funny I find it,” Waititi says. “New Zealand is a giant suburb. We’ve got maybe three cities, and I hesitate to call them cities. A lot of your time as a kid is spent throwing stones at lampposts and dreaming up things and being goofy.”

That understated silliness runs through one of his best films, *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*, which is being rereleased for its tenth anniversary this month. It follows Ricky (Julian Dennison), a hyperactive foster child who is taken in by a rural couple, Hector (Sam Neill) and Bella (Rima Te Wiata). When Bella dies suddenly Ricky flees into the New Zealand bush, reluctantly followed by glowering Hector. A manhunt for them ensues.

Neill, who died last month aged 78, was one of Waititi’s favourite actors. “He was probably the most famous of our New Zealand actors and he was the only fit for that role,” he says. They became friends, and Waititi visited Neill’s vineyard in Central Otago, where he kept pigs. “He actually named a pig after me. I checked in on how that pig was doing and he said, ‘Oh, he was delicious.’

“Sam was the most relaxed person on set, because he’d seen it all. When everyone was freaking out he’d just have this smirk, like, it’s all gonna be fine,” Waititi says. “New Zealand is a very toxic, patriarchal society based on machismo and sports and drinking beer. If you said you wanted to be in the arts you’d be called a poof. Sam didn’t give a shit about any of that. He knew the arts were the most important thing.”

Hunt for the Wilderpeople started off as a serious movie, Waititi says. “I thought I was going to be this really intense, dramatic film-maker. At the end of that version Hector gets shot to death by the cops and Ricky ends up still in the foster system. Luckily we didn’t make that film. It would have got into Cannes probably — anything where kids are hurt. There’s no chance *Jojo Rabbit* would have got into Cannes because they didn’t get shipped off to Siberia to a sex gulag.”

What he came up with instead was warmer and funnier, with much of the comedy stemming from Hector’s grumpy irritation with Ricky. Hector has shades of Neill’s Dr Grant in *Jurassic Park*, who professes to hate children. Kids love those scenarios in films because there is a safety to the nastiness — they know that the character is a softie deep down, as Neill was. “There was something behind Sam’s eyes, you just knew,” Waititi says.

Growing up in Wellington and the Bay of Plenty, stern adults were the norm, he says. “There was this unspoken rule that everyone was a parent to all the kids and would keep them in line, which doesn’t happen now. American studios freak out at the idea of a grown-up being mean to a kid and I think it’s just the overcompensating guilt about being mean to the whole world.”

Waititi’s mother, an academic, met his father, an artist and biker gang leader, in prison, where she was volunteering and he was an inmate. They divorced when he was five, and his dad wasn’t around much, which coloured Waititi’s films. “I don’t know how to write a couple who are together,” he says. “I only saw it at friends’ houses growing up and it felt kind of weird. There’s a really intense focus that happens between a child and a single parent.”

Hunt for the Wilderpeople played well with children, which “reminds you not to dumb stuff down for kids”, he says. “Scrolling on the TV, I get thumbnail after thumbnail of this inane, mindless stuff.” He is proud that most of his films — even *Boy* (2010), which features child abandonment and abuse — can be watched by his children. Plenty of actors can’t say

From top: Taika Waititi and Roman Griffin Davis in Jojo Rabbit; Jenna Ortega and Natasha Lyonne in Klara and the Sun

that. "Christian Bale — it's not a great box set for a five-year-old."

Waititi has two daughters, Te Kainga o te Hinekahu, 14, and Matewa Kiritapu, 10, with Chelsea Winstanley, a New Zealander who co-produced *What We Do in the Shadows* and *Jojo Rabbit*. He and Winstanley divorced in 2018, and four years later he married Ora, to whom he had been introduced at a Hollywood barbecue by the actor Robert Pattinson. Ora proposed to Waititi. They divide their time between Auckland, London and Los Angeles.

How much does his comedy taste overlap with hers? "Rita's a bit younger than me [35], so I showed her *Blackadder* the other day," he says. It didn't go down as well as he had hoped. "It's like *The Young Ones* — the kind of thing you need to see at a certain age. She said, 'I know this is funny, I'm just finding it a little hard to catch on.'"

Has Ora introduced him to anything? He looks sheepish. "I'll be honest, she's pulled me into the world of rom-coms. I was like, 'I'm not watching *Sweet Home Alabama*,' and I watched it and I was like, 'That's pretty satisfying.' There's a reason these things work. I'm getting older now. I like riding up on the couch, having my little snacks and watching something like that."

That cosy epiphany — and the ulterior motive of wanting to see more of his wife — has led to them developing a rom-com to star in together. "When you're married to someone who's super-busy and you're super-busy you've gotta work out how to be together, and the only way to do that is to work together. I mean, she's in Munich right now," he says with a laugh. "So she's going to be in stuff I make and we're writing some stuff together." Ora, who played Christian Grey's sister in the *Fifty Shades of Grey* films and the Queen of Hearts in the *Descendants* franchise, is "a really funny actor", he says.

She is involved in *Klara and the Sun*, although in what way is hush-hush. My money is on a song. The film, out in October, tells the story of a sick girl called Josie (Mia Tharia) who is given an android companion, played by Jenna Ortega of *Wednesday*. Amy Adams co-stars as Josie's mother. "I never thought I'd make something that felt this meaningful," Waititi says. "It's a maturing, I suppose, of my silliness." That's down to the quality of Ishiguro's book, he says. "You're like, 'Did a kid write this? This is so simple.' And then you realise, 'Oh no, a master wrote this. Everything is going along under the surface.'"

Could he have a relationship with an artificial being? "Maybe. I know some people who are in relationships with a chat entity. It's happening and they're happy. That's part of what this film is about. Does it matter any more what your companion is? We want to hear just a handful of things every day: 'I love you. I see you. I'm here listening to your boring story about work. What did you dream about last night? And I'll see you in the morning.'"

That doesn't sound too bad actually. Although living with Rita Ora probably shades it.

Climb inside a whale — and get up close with Erik the polar bear

Hull Maritime Museum reopens this weekend after a £20 million refit. It's a triumph, says Libby Purves

Climb the spiral staircase into the dome of the old Hull Dock Office, and below the sculptural Victorian roofscape you see docks turned to gardens, artful streetscapes, a once-hardscrabble city enjoying the backwash of being 2017 City of Culture. From an £80 million investment, a quarter (£20.4 million) fell to the redesign of this Maritime Museum so below me in dizzying profusion are new galleries by the top heritage architects Purcell, some elegant Angus Ross furniture and treasures irresistible to anybody with a feel for the sea, especially for Hull's centuries afloat.

There are immense showpieces, brutal memories and small delicate wonders. Walk in and there's a monstrous North Atlantic whale skeleton — named a "right whale" as the most profitable to pursue. Children can crawl into a bubble under it and gaze up; Darwinians will rejoice that it's one of the few whale remnants in the world that retain vestigial leg bones from times when its prehistoric ancestors walked ashore. Around it are relics of the whaling trade: a harpoon bent almost double by impact, cauldrons for melting blubber, objects from the "distant waters" trade northward, made possible when engines began. So there are Inuit crafts, and sculptures of two orphans "adopted" by a trawler (with, by the way, a note that the Inuit people now make it clear that they always looked after their own orphans, so their forebears probably didn't want any such Victorian-exoticist kidnap).

But the remains and attitudes of a wild, hard, exploratory and hunting past are real, its useful results from lamp oil to corsets and brushware on show here. Two floors up is the world's second biggest collection of scrimshaw (the largest is in Massachusetts), sailors' carving on teeth and tusks. There's one whale ear bone painted with eyelashes and lipstick, some lonely chap's reminder of his womenfolk: apparently a jutting nose-like bit made ear bones popular for turning into faces. "Scrimshandering" art is always touching, with its tiny, careful detail of ships and comrades, but there's a double poignancy in this humanisation of an ear that once channelled the song of distant fellow whales.

It's a robustly wise decision of the director Robin Diaper to dive straight into not just fishing but whaling, without apologetic modern wincing. The same applies to the enormous polar bear, caught by the whaling ship SS Erik and borrowed long-term from Dundee museum. There was delight in Hull at news of Erik's return after a break: he's family. In 2010 conservators found some newspapers from 1874 stuffed inside him.

Erik the polar bear is installed. Below: whale ear bones, painted and natural

> "It's one of very few whale skeletons with legs"

Chiefly it's about humans: industrious, ingenious, brave, struggling for a living. Shudder at the vast trawl-door at the entrance: think about hauling a wet barn door aboard in a heavy sea. Apprentices aged just 11 were sent trawling, and only in the 1880s did desertion stop meaning prison.

There are other memories: of mailships and the merchant marine, and a quiet memorial room to lost seafarers of every age. There are shipbuilding models, and the Marfleet collection of dockers' tools and hooks. As a modern museum it has plenty of video, a little planetarium and a chance to steer a trawler through virtual icebergs (I hit one just to hear the crunch).

But reality dominates as it must, from narwhal tusks to a letter written by Lillian Bilocca, the "headscarf revolutionary" whose campaign after a series of tragedies in 1968 forced Harold Wilson to enforce better safety. The women who for centuries waited, tended to the men and struggled when the fishing was bad also get their due. But also, almost teasingly, nearby is an up-to-date portrait of Karolina Jabrzyk: Humber Pilot 1st Class and one of the few women in that dangerous big-ship trade. Oh, and in the grand old Dock Company boardroom I was casually told about an expert team of eight women who, over six weeks, lay on high platforms under the absurdly ornate ceiling to clean off a century of chaps' pipe and cigar smoke.

The museum is a joy, but it wants to avoid being a park-and-run destination; you can walk past Prince's Quay to the old Spurn Lightship, and Queen's Gardens, another dock filled in since the 1930s, is a glorious parade, streetlights echoing crane-jibs and trees as tall as masts.

Then you finally reach the North End Shipyard where, next week, a tricky engineering calculation of tides, tugs and lock-barriers will bring the arrival and dry-docking of the Arctic Corsair. It's the last of the majestic sidewinder trawlers, famous for ramming an Icelandic gunboat in the 1970s Cod Wars. School parties will love that.

Hull Maritime Museum opens on Sat

Your weekday brain boost

More puzzles Pages 14-16

Every day, Monday to Thursday, a page of extra puzzles to give your brain an extended workout

Samurai medium

Fill each grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length.

	6 9	7			4			
3	2 5	6				8		
		3		6				
2	9 6 4	7 3 4	2		6 5 2			
				8				
	4	8			9			
9	8		7 9					

	5 7	4 2		9 6				
			5	4 7				
	4	6 8						
8	6 3	4 8 7	1	8 4				
2	7	6						
5 7 4		7	4 6	3 8				

			6 9	8 4 3	1 3 4	5	3 5	9 1 2
	6 8	1	2	9		1		
	9	6	4		2 9	7	7	
2	4 7	5 3	9	6 3			5 3 6 9	2 7 4 3
8		1	3	7				5
9 1	2 3	9 7		2 8			1 2	5 6

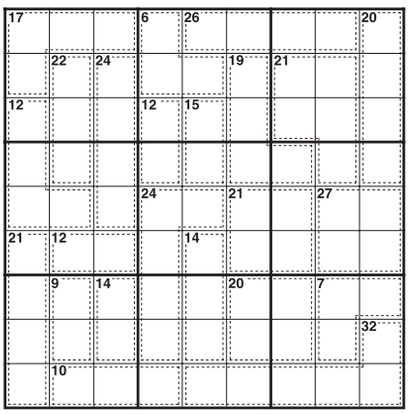
	5							
5	3 9	2 7 4	3		1 5 3			
	5	3						
	2							
9 4	8	7	5	6				

Sudoku difficult

	2			6			8	4
4			3	9		6	5	
	7			5		8		3
							6	2
	3			2			9	7
1			9	4		7	2	
	4			7			3	6

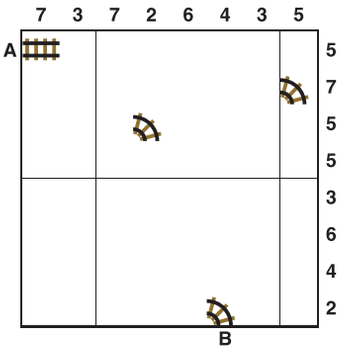
Killer deadly

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.



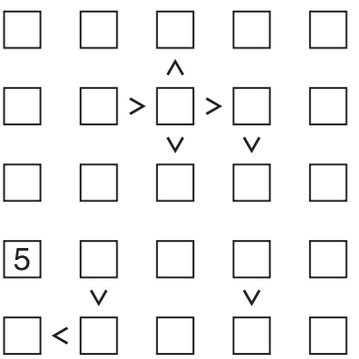
Train Tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

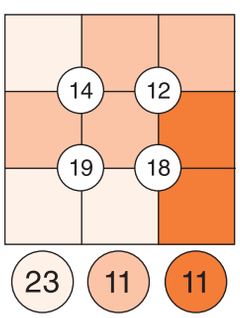


Futoshiki

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.



Sakuro

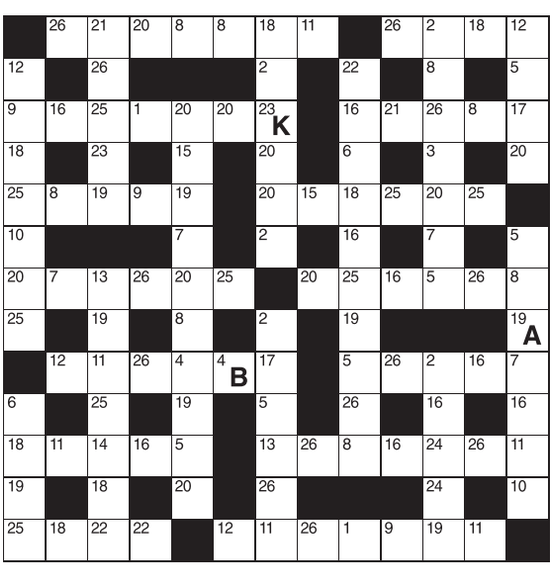


Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

Play Mini Sudoku every day Monday-Sunday online at thetimes.com and on Live app

Codeword

Every letter in the crossword-style grid, right, is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded.



A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4 B	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19 A	20	21	22	23 K	24	25	26

Mini Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6

Solutions in Monday's Times2

4					3
		1	6		
	1			3	
	4			1	
		3	2		
2					1

Yesterday's solutions

SAMURAI

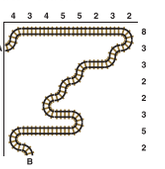
4	3	8	9	6	1	7	2	5					6	8	4	5	9	3	7	1	2
7	9	1	2	4	5	3	8	6					3	9	1	7	2	6	8	5	4
5	6	2	8	7	3	4	9	1					2	7	5	8	1	4	6	9	3
9	8	5	1	2	4	6	3	7					1	2	9	6	7	5	4	3	8
1	2	4	7	3	6	8	5	9					8	4	6	9	3	1	5	2	7
6	7	3	5	9	8	2	1	4					5	3	7	2	4	8	9	6	1
2	4	6	3	5	9	1	7	8	9	3	6		4	5	2	1	6	7	3	8	9
8	5	7	4	1	2	9	6	3	5	2	4		7	1	8	9	3	5	9	2	4
3	1	9	6	8	7	5	4	2	1	8	7		9	6	3	4	8	2	1	7	5
						7	8	9	3	6	5		2	4	1						
						3	5	4	2	7	1		6	8	9						
						6	2	1	4	9	8		3	7	5						
5	3	7	1	4	2	8	9	6	7	1	3		5	2	4	6	9	7	8	3	1
6	4	9	8	3	7	2	1	5	6	4	9		8	3	7	5	4	1	2	6	9
1	8	2	9	6	5	4	3	7	8	5	2		1	9	6	2	8	3	7	4	5
2	9	8	5	7	1	3	6	4					2	1	3	9	7	4	6	5	8
7	6	5	3	2	4	9	8	1					6	4	8	3	5	2	9	1	7
4	1	3	6	8	9	5	7	2					7	5	9	1	6	8	3	2	4
3	5	1	2	9	6	7	4	8					9	6	1	7	3	5	4	8	2
9	7	6	4	5	8	1	2	3					4	7	2	8	1	6	5	9	3
8	2	4	7	1	3	6	5	9					3	8	5	4	9	2	9	7	6

SAKURO

MINI SUDOKU

3	1	5	4	2	6
2	4	6	1	5	3
5	6	4	3	1	2
1	2	3	6	4	5
4	3	2	5	6	1
6	5	1	2	3	4

TRAIN TRACKS



FUTOSHIKI

2	5	1	3	4
1	2	3	4	5
4	1	5	2	3
3	4	2	5	1
5	3	4	1	2

SUDOKU

6	2	9	3	4	7	5	8	1
8	7	1	9	5	2	3	4	6
5	4	3	8	6	1	9	2	7
7	1	2	6	8	3	4	9	5
3	9	8	5	7	4	6	1	2
4	6	5	1	2	9	7	3	8
9	3	6	7	1	8	2	5	4
1	5	4	2	3	6	8	7	9
2	8	7	4	9	5	1	6	3

KILLER

3	4	6	1	8	9	2	7	5
2	1	5	3	6	7	8	9	4
8	9	7	5	4	2	6	1	3
6	3	2	4	9	5	7	8	1
7	5	4	8	2	1	3	6	9
9	8	1	7	3	6	5	4	2
5	2	8	9	7	4	1	3	6
1	7	9	6	5	3	4	2	8
4	6	3	2	1	8	9	5	7

CODEWORD

Fried chicken is served Super Size Me-style

Ben Dowell
TV review

Big Chicken
Netflix
★★★☆☆

Believe it or not, fried chicken bought from the more than 6,000 strip-lit outlets in the UK serving it won't provide the most nutritious meal of your week, enhance your mood or have you skipping about your day. But if you spend 28 days eating nothing but the stuff you may start to look like Mo Gilligan, the bouncy comedian reduced to a hollow-eyed, depressed, bloated, lethargic and miserable wreck. "I can't sleep because of fried f***ing chicken," he moans.

There isn't much in *Big Chicken: A Fast Food Conspiracy* (Netflix) that we didn't already suspect, but the facts are stark and shocking. Mass-produced chicken pollutes our waterways with faeces (in a year enough chicken faeces is generated in America to cover London) while polluting our guts. Globally there are more obese children than hungry children; an additive used in processed chicken is used to lubricate condoms. And if babies grew at the rate of modern "frankenchickens" they would be the size of an adult pig in two months.

While noble, a documentary-maker putting their body on the line has been done, more memorably, by Morgan Spurlock, whose *Super Size Me* briefly wiped the smile off Ronald McDonald's chops in 2004. But props to ebullient Gilligan for adopting this approach for the younger Netflix audience (and, I hope, my teenage daughters, who will find their dad less keen to hand over 20 quid for a quiet life when they ask for their next Popeyes or Wingstop). As *Clarkson's Farm* shows, the streamers are just as capable of making valuable public service films as the BBC or Channel 4.

Gilligan crams in a lot (perhaps too much), including a long jaunt to America, where he speaks to health experts and activists concerned about the welfare of people working in the mega processing factories/slaughterhouses (one worker was decapitated, and some have to wear nappies because they are not allowed toilet breaks, we were told) before joining British campaigners as they set about breaking into a chicken farm in Lincolnshire. Gilligan chickens out. "I would love to but my girlfriend said no," he says with a grin that didn't massively impress me or the activists. They don't have much luck anyway.

The bland corporate statements from PR departments are familiar garnishes to a testing meal where the multiple shots of Gilligan chowing down will make you genuinely queasy. But it is still shocking to witness archive footage of an "influencer" (possibly a word even more revolting than "bargain bucket") visiting a farm that supplied KFC and gobbing on about how well the birds are treated. Hideous.

Gilligan is amiable, self-effacing and keen to learn, even when doing what he calls "proper journalism". He is also very aware, as he reminds us many times, of how important fried chicken is to the black identity, remembering many happy days spent with his friends in south London chewing the fat (and gristle).

Maybe partly because he feels conflicted, though, his film pulls its punches — no more so than at the end, when Gilligan heads a little too gleefully to a fried chicken festival with his pals and tucks in. Would it have been too much to call on us all to stop eating this rubbish?

NETFLIX

Mo Gilligan ate fried chicken for 28 days straight for the film

Radio choice

The Guitar Story
Radio 4, 9.30am

In May 1966 a voice in the crowd at the Free Trade Hall in Manchester shouted, "Judas!" at Bob Dylan, *above*, for daring to play an electric guitar, breaking away from the folkie purity of the acoustic. Marking this 60th anniversary, John Wilson presents a four-part look at the story of the instrument as a driver of social and cultural change. Wilson — the bass player in the band Centrist Dad, alongside the vocalist Robert Peston and the drummer Ed Balls — begins with the guitar's history, from a classical instrument in Spain used in flamenco to its adoption by American blues musicians.
Clair Woodward

Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app

5.00am Tom Nunan with Early Breakfast **6.00** Kate McCann and Stig Abell with Breakfast **10.00** Ed Vaizey **1.00pm** Sebastian Payne **2.00** Aasmah Mir **4.00** John Pienaar with Drive **7.00** Kait Borsay **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz

6.30am The Sara Cox Breakfast Show **9.30** Vernon Kay **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** DJ Spoony **4.00** Joel Dommett **7.00** Edith Bowman **9.00** The Country Show with Darius Rucker **10.00** The Good Groove with Melvin Odoom **12.00** Connor Phillips **3.00am** Alternative Sounds of the 90s (r) **4.00** Owain Wyn Evans

Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz

6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live
Mark Forrest introduces highlights from the Proms. BBC Proms — Rachmaninov (*Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*); Ryedale Festival — Schubert (arr. Liszt) (*Der Müller und der Bach & Liebesbotschaft*); International Sacred Music Festival, Fribourg — Kuhnau (*O bone Jesu*); BBC Proms — Oliver Knussen (*Flourish with Fireworks*); Ryedale Festival — Chausson (Concerto for violin, piano and string quartet); and BBC Proms — Shostakovich (Symphony No. 11 in G minor, *The Year 1905*)
4.00 Composer of the Week: Mozart (1756-1791)
Kate Molleson explores Antonio Salieri's relationship with Mozart
5.00 In Tune
7.00 Live BBC Proms 2026
The Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique & Monteverdi Choir conducted by Mark Elder in a semi-staged performance of Weber's *Oberon*. With Nicky Spence (Oberon) and Jennifer Davis (Reiza). Presented by Andrew McGregor, live from the Royal Albert Hall
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night

Radio 4

FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz

5.00am News Summary
5.04 Sideways (4/8) (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today
9.00 Natalie Haynes
Stands Up for the Classics
Christopher Biggins and Llewelyn Morgan learn about Nero (2/7)
9.30 Choice The Guitar Story
Exploring how the instrument has driven cultural change (1/4)
10.00 Woman's Hour
Presented by Chloe Tilley
11.00 The Three Ages of Child
Dr Guddi Singh travels across London (2/3) (r)
11.45 Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away
With Russell Kane and money mentor Selina Flaviu (4/5) (r)
12.04pm Scam Secrets
With Shari Vahl (2/8)
12.32 Sliced Bread
The scientific evidence behind a product's bold claims (6/8)
1.00 The World at One
1.45 The Bare Necessities
Dan Richards learns how survival skills can help build ecological and cultural resilience (4/5)
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: A Portmeirion Love Affair with Life
By Bethan Roberts
3.00 This Natural Life
Tracey Emin introduces Martha Kearney to the wild waves of the sea in Margate (5/6)
3.27 Radio 4 Appeal (r)
3.30 Feedback
4.00 The Briefing Room
David Aaronovitch discusses a story in the news
4.30 BBC Inside Science
The latest scientific research
5.00 PM
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Icklewick FM
Chris and Amy await the arrival of the Great Zambino (2/6) (r)
7.00 The Archers
One resident faces an emergency dash and Brad is keen to help
7.15 Front Row
Arts programme
8.00 At Your Own Peril
Exploring the birth of modern risk management (3/5) (r)
8.15 The Media Show
The latest news from the fast-changing media world (r)
9.00 Loose Ends
With Fiona Allen, Olly Smith and Natalie Wildgoose (r)
9.45 The Cows Are Mad Events from 1995 (5/10) (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime: The Vicar of Wakefield
By Oliver Goldsmith (4/10)
11.00 Radical
11.30 Hollywood and the Adland Five
The work of Tony Scott (4/4) (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Tony Hawks Is Giving Nothing Away (4/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra

Digital only

8.00am Believe It! **8.30** Following Pappano **8.45** Small Island **9.00** Icklewick FM **9.30** Behind the Taverna **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** Great Lives **10.30** The Race to Dover **11.00** The Waiting Game **11.30** Who Killed Aldrich Kemp? **12.00** Capital Gains **12.30pm** The Burkiss Way **1.00** Believe It! **1.30** Following Pappano **1.45** Small Island **2.00** We've Been Here Before **2.30** The Change **3.00** Berlin **4.00** Great Lives **4.30** The Race to Dover **5.00** The Waiting Game **5.30** Who Killed Aldrich Kemp? **6.00** Capital Gains **6.30** The Burkiss Way **7.00** Believe It! **7.30** Following Pappano **7.45** Small Island **8.00** We've Been Here Before **8.30** The Change **9.00** Berlin **10.00** Comedy Club: Icklewick FM **10.30** 1966 and All That **11.00** The Casebook of Max and Ivan **11.30** Sophie Willan's Guide to Normality **11.45** What's the Story, Ashley Storrie?

Radio 5 Live

MW: 693, 909

5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** 5 Live Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Adrian Chiles **2.00pm** Matt Chorley **4.00** 5 Live Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport **8.00** Live Rugby League: St Helens v Hull FC (Kick-off **8.00**). Commentary on the Super League match, at BrewDog Stadium **10.00** Johnny l'Anson **1.00am** Edward Adoo

talkSPORT

MW: 1053, 1089 kHz

5.00am Early Breakfast **6.00** Breakfast with Shebahn Aherne **10.00** Adam Catterall & Carlton Cole **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Baker **4.00** talkSPORT Drive **7.00** The Transfer Insiders **10.00** The Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time

Talk

Digital only

6.00am Ian Collins **10.00** Julia Hartley Brewer **1.00pm** Mark Dolan **4.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **7.00** Peter Cardwell **10.00** Andre Walker ft. Ash **1.00am** Paul Ross

6 Music

Digital only

5.00am Chris Hawkins **7.00** Nick Grimshaw. With the actor James Norton **10.00** New Music Fix **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Emily Pilbeam **7.00** New Music Fix Daily **9.00** Riley & Coe **11.00** Artist in Residence: Ezra Collective **12.00** New Music Fix Playlist **1.00am** New Album Fix **2.00** Jukebox **3.00** 6 Music's 90s Forever **4.00** 6 Music's 00s Forever

Virgin Radio

Digital only

6.30am Steve Denyer on The Chris Evans Breakfast Show with Moneybox **10.00** Emma B **2.00pm** Ben Jones **6.00** Geoff Lloyd **10.00** Goldierocks **2.00am** Stu Elmore

Classic FM

FM: 100-102 MHz

6.30am Classic FM Breakfast with Dan Walker **9.00** The Classic FM Hall of Fame Hour with Dan Walker **10.00** Aled Jones **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings with Zeb Soanes **9.00** Classic FM's Composer Carousel With Zeb Soanes **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00** Early Breakfast

television

PICKS OF THE DAY

Possession
Sky Atlantic/Now, 9pm/10pm

Gugu Mbatha-Raw stars in this "supernatural thriller" as Claudia, a biracial lawyer dispatched from Bristol to Jamaica. Her job there is to protect the right of Oliver (Jonny Lee Miller) to inherit his family's estate, in the face of a claim that his late father left it to the mysterious Cudjoe East (Sheldon Shepherd). Gothic tropes abound in Claudia's first visit to Hope Hill, outside which wild partying continues through the night; and soon a second narrative emerges, set on the same plantation when a slave revolt is put down. Linking the twin storylines, Cudjoe claims to be from this faraway era, and condemned to wander through time. The script initially seems predictable, but the storytelling improves markedly once *Possession* unmasks itself as *Sinners*-like historical horror as well as modern legal parable. **John Dugdale**

Gugu Mbatha-Raw in Possession

The Very Best of Peter Sellers
Sky Arts/Now, 9pm

In 1958 *The Best of Peter Sellers* was released, an album of audio spoofs of newfangled things such as pop music and TV. *The Very Best of Peter Sellers* was released in 1990, ten years after Sellers's death, and tried to do the same for his screen career. While it's another dazzling display of versatility, it leans heavily towards his later movies — international, in colour, and mostly overtly out to get laughs — with clips from the *Pink Panther* series and even from *What's New Pussycat?*, a Sixties shambles. Arguably his "very best" roles were in black and white (such as *Dr Strangelove*), were somewhere between drama and dark comedy, and/or were in films made for British audiences, such as *I'm All Right Jack* and *The Ladykillers*. **JD**

Who Do You Think You Are?
BBC1, 9pm

The Olympic heptathlete Katarina

BBC1

6.00am Breakfast
9.30 Animal Park (r) (AD)
10.15 Trace, Track, Get My Car Back (r)
10.45 Expert Witness (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer
12.15pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing. A blacksmith tackles a rusty water tank
2.45 Escape to the Country. Nicki Chapman is with a young couple from Manchester who seek a home in West Yorkshire (r)
3.45 The Bidding Room. Dealers bid for a football game, wooden steps and a map (r)
4.30 The Answer Run. Jason Manford hosts the fast-paced quiz show in which three couples face a series of 50/50 questions
5.15 Pointless. Quiz hosted by Alexander Armstrong and Konnie Huq (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

7.00 **The One Show** Live magazine show with Alex Jones and Roman Kemp

7.30 **EastEnders** Sheila faces mounting pressure, Priya is confronted with some hard truths, and Mark clashes with Max over Lauren (AD)

8.00 **Fake or Fortune?** The art detectives head to Somerset, where 15 unsigned prints of Lucian Freud's etching *Girl with Fig Leaf* have been discovered in a garage (4/4) (AD)

9.00 **Who Do You Think You Are?** Katarina Johnson-Thompson travels to the Bahamas and Miami in search of her ancestry, and discovers tales of resilience and courage. Last in the series. *See picks of the day* (AD)

10.00 **BBC News at Ten**

10.30 **BBC Regional News and Weather**

10.40 **Murder 24/7** The first of a two-part investigation into the 2025 murder of 54-year-old Hereford man Jamie Gawler, found in his flat having being beaten to death (5/8) (r) (AD)

11.40 **Murder 24/7** Part two of two. Police struggle to build a case — until a bloody footprint is found, providing a breakthrough (6/8) (r) (AD)

12.40am Alan Carr's Picture Slam Game show in which contestants have to identify a board of images, with a chance of winning up to £10,000 if they know them all. Playing this time are friends from Birmingham, friends from Lancashire, and a couple from Cardiff (r) **1.30-6.00** BBC News

BBC2

6.15am Homes Under the Hammer (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Gardeners' World (r) (AD, SL)
9.00 BBC News
1.00pm Richard Osman's House of Games. Sean Fletcher, Louise Minchin, Chris Washington and Kimberly Wyatt take part (r)
1.30 The Finish Line. Quiz hosted by Roman Kemp and Sarah Greene (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? Anneka Rice, Shane Todd and Remi Burgz answer questions about Jedburgh (r)
2.45 The Hairy Bikers' Bakeation. The duo bake their way through France (r) (AD)
3.45 The Farmers' Country Showdown. A prize at the Mid Devon Show is vital (r)
4.30 Vintage Antiques Roadshow. The team visits Toronto. First shown in 2003 (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Ickworth House near Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games. Double bill. With Gethin Jones, Kate Thornton, Tiff Stevenson and Gary Wilmot (r)

7.00 **Escape to the Country** Alistair Appleton guides a pair of budding entrepreneurs who want to escape to the Cotswolds with a generous £900,000 budget (r)

8.00 **Digging for Britain** Archaeological treasures in the west of Britain, including a rare medieval cemetery, a disappearing Mesolithic landscape, a mysterious iron age burial, and the ruins of a gothic masterpiece. Alice Roberts presents (3/6) (r) (AD)

9.00 **The Devil in the Family: The Fall of Ruby Franke** With the Franke family isolated, people on the outside try to find out what is happening, and the reality is worse than anyone imagined. Last in the series (AD)

9.50 **The Fens: A Wild Year** (2/3) (r) (AD)

10.00 **Inside No 9** Detective inspector Katrina is determined to crack the case of a missing boy (3/6) (r) (AD)

10.30 **Newsnight** With Paddy O'Connell

11.05 **FILM: Women Talking (15, 2022)** In 2010, the women of an isolated religious community grapple with reconciling a brutal reality with their faith. Co-writer/director Sarah Polley's drama starring Rooney Mara, Claire Foy and Jessie Buckley

12.40am Sign Zone: Ambulance A young patient is reported to have had a seizure while out walking in a forest in Bingley, West Yorkshire — but paramedics are struggling to locate her (r) (SL) **1.40-2.40** Evolution. Chris Packham tells the story of the evolution of the bat (r) (AD, SL)

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning. Featuring a mix of celebrity chat and showbusiness news
1.30pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal. David Dickinson and his team are in Sheffield, where Mark Stevens meets his match, and Tracy Thackray-Howitt splashes cash (r) (AD)
3.00 Deal or No Deal. Stephen Mulhern hosts as a contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order, taking on the infamous Banker for the chance to win a life-changing cash prize (r) (AD)
4.00 Tipping Point. Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning a £10,000 jackpot (r)
5.00 The Chase. Bradley Walsh hosts as contestants from Oldham, Essex, Gloucester and Scunthorpe hope they can take home thousands of pounds together (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

7.30 **Tom Kerridge Cooks Italy** Tom learns how farmers produce tomatoes for passata, and later heads south to cook lamb cutlets (4/6) (AD)

8.00 **Emmerdale** Charity takes big steps, while the Dingles unite in their grief at Monty's funeral (AD)

8.30 **Coronation Street** Kit extends an ominous invitation to Gary, and Tim gets reacquainted with Richie (AD)

9.00 **The Chase Around the World** The teams land in Paris to take on the Vixen and the Beast, who have set a series of quiz questions that the players must solve to find Bradley Walsh at the finish line (4/6) (AD)

10.00 **ITV News at Ten; Weather;** followed by Regional News

10.45 **FILM: Casino Royale (15, 2006)** James Bond pursues an international criminal responsible for financing terrorist organisations across the world. Spy thriller, directed by Martin Campbell and starring Daniel Craig in his first outing as 007, with Eva Green, Mads Mikkelsen, Judi Dench and Giancarlo Giannini (AD)

1.10am Shop on TV 3.00 The Summit. The group is reduced from 14 to 11 as brutal hikes and treacherous crossings prove too much for some and the Mountain's Keeper forces their hands yet again (r) (AD, SL) **3.50** Unwind with ITV **5.05-6.00** Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special (r) (AD, SL)

Channel 4

6.30am The King of Queens (r) (AD)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD)
9.10 Frasier (r) (AD)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r)
12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It. Items in south Wales include a snooker table and a Gothic-style organ (r) (AD)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway. Two strangers buy a bungalow in Glossop (r)
2.10 Countdown. With Ade Adepitan
3.00 A Place in the Sun. A couple want to fulfil their long-held dream of buying a holiday home on southern Tenerife (r)
4.00 Saving Country Houses with Penelope Keith. At Chavenage House in the Cotswolds, work begins to rescue a derelict and overgrown pond (r) (AD)
5.00 Château DIY. At the Château de Brives, two enormous barns are transformed (r) (AD)
6.00 American Pickers. Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz come across a huge 200,000-square-foot factory (r) (AD)

7.00 **Channel 4 News**

8.00 **Renovation Rescue** In West Sussex, Vogue Williams and Luke Mabbott help to salvage an artist's dream of a relaxing retirement near her daughter and grandchildren, by the sea (AD)

9.00 **Murder Case: The Digital Detectives** How detectives used digital forensics to uncover the events of the night 19-year-old Matthew Daulby was fatally stabbed after a street fight in Ormskirk in July 2023 (AD)

10.00 **The Body Detectives** The work of an organisation dedicated to revisiting forgotten cases, beginning with the disappearance of a man off the Norfolk coast in 1984 while on a family holiday (1/3) (r) (AD)

11.05 **Social Media Monsters** Examining serious crimes where social media has played a significant role, including interviews with victims and input from experts. Beginning with the murder of 15-year-old Holly Newton, whose social-media accounts were hacked (1/10) (r) (AD)

12.05am Crime Scene Cleaners (r) (AD, SL) **1.00** Murder Case: The Digital Detectives (r) (AD, SL) **1.55** Ramsay's Hotel Hell (r) (AD, SL) **2.45** The Undeclared War (r) (AD, SL) **4.30** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It: Brilliant Builds (r) (AD, SL) **4.55** Couples Come Dine with Me (r) (SL) **5.50-6.30** Countdown (r)

5

6.00am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis
12.45pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright
2.20 FILM: Evil in a Small Town (PG, TVM, 2023) When her parents go missing on a family vacation, a teenager must find them — but she may be trusting the wrong people. Thriller starring Veronica Ramirez
4.00 Castle. Part one of two. Beckett, Castle and the team investigate when a woman is murdered and the evidence points to the return of serial killer Jerry Tyson (r)
4.55 Love Nature. An initiative encouraging children to engage in outdoor play (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Menorca: A Year in the Sun. Part one of two. Joanna Lumley narrates this profile of the Mediterranean island, and cameras focus on Menorca's capital, Mahon, which is home to the Med's largest natural harbour (r)
6.55 5 News Update

7.00 **Around the World in First Class with Josie Gibson** Josie flies upper class to Grenada, and explores a tucked-away boutique resort called 473, a private suite of villas by the sea. Josie also takes a trip on a fully catered catamaran (2/4)

7.55 **5 News Update**

8.00 **Cornwall: A Year by the Sea** At Watergate Bay, Michelin-starred chef Chris Eden and his team attempt their first beach feast of the summer. Racing against the tides, they have just hours to transform the sand into a fine-dining restaurant (10/10)

9.00 **Benidorm Is Murder** A rooftop murder exposes old grudges and buried secrets at a struggling, debt-ridden comedy club. Drama starring John Hannah (2/6) (AD)

10.00 **Killer at the Crime Scene** In a Silicon Valley home invasion, millionaire Raveesh Kumra is murdered. No forced entry leads investigators to suspect an inside job (r)

11.00 **Murdered at First Sight** Investigating the case of Jorge Rodriguez, a father of three and soon-to-be grandfather, who was shot while in his car on 4 July, 2017. He sought help from stunned passers-by before dying in the hospital (2/10) (r)

12.05am Street Cops: Catching the Yobs A drunk (r) **1.00** Cruise TV with LoveitBookit (r) **2.00** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r) **2.50** Castle (r) **3.40** Friends (r) **4.35** The Highland Vet (r) (SL) **5.25** Entertainment News on 5 **5.35** Milo (r) (SL) **5.45-6.00** The Adventures of Paddington (r) (SL)

television

Johnson-Thompson has always felt "stuck in between two sides". Her father, Ricky, was from the Bahamas, and Johnson-Thompson spent the first year of her life there, before her parents separated and she moved to Liverpool. She heads to the Bahamas in search of her roots, tracing her ancestors to a tiny settlement, before her journey takes her to Miami, uncovering a succession of distant relatives who worked to better themselves and their communities.
Joe Clay

Christopher Reeve: Keeping Hope in Motion
BBC4, 10.15pm

Christopher Reeve's son Matthew updated this Emmy-nominated documentary in 2007, chronicling the actor's gruelling daily rehabilitation after a 1995 riding accident that left him paralysed from the neck down. Shot over two years, the film demonstrates the powerful bond between Reeve and his wife, Dana, as well as his indomitable spirit. "I don't want to be melodramatic," he said in 2004, a few months before his death. "But I'm 51 and the clock is ticking... I don't want to be a senior citizen before I'm cured." **JC**

STREAMING CHOICE

The Shards
Disney+

It makes perfect sense that *The Shards* should begin on May 23, 1980, the same day that *The Shining* was released: from the very start, this adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis's 2023 novel is out to disturb. Narrated by Igby Rigney's deadpan high-schooler Bret (yes, metafiction might be involved), it tells the queasily intriguing story of a group of privileged LA teens whose gilded cage is infiltrated by an upsettingly inventive serial killer called The Trawler. Also starring celebrity scions Kaia Gerber and Homer Gere, it's a slasher *Beverly Hills 90210*: nasty, cold and horribly compelling.
Victoria Segal

FILM CHOICE

Dance with a Stranger (15, 1984)
Film4, 11.40pm

Mike Newell's drama about Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain. Miranda Richardson plays Ellis, a former nude model who manages a London drinking den, where she meets David Blakely (Rupert Everett), a playboy racing driver. They begin a relationship that leads to the ultimate crime of passion. (96min) **JC**

BBC4

7.00pm Great British Railway Journeys. Michael Portillo travels from Northallerton to Chester-Le-Street. Last in the series (AD) **7.30** Pubs, Ponds and Power: The Story of the Village. The history of Cromford in Derbyshire **8.00 FILM: Superman (PG, 1978)** Comic-strip adventure starring Christopher Reeve (AD) **10.15** Christopher Reeve: Keeping Hope in Motion. The late actor's fight to regain his ability to breathe on his own. *See picks of the day* **11.15** Parkinson. With Mel Smith, Kenneth Griffith and Christopher Reeve. First broadcast in 1982 **12.15am** Ian Rankin's Hidden Edinburgh (AD) **1.10** Pubs, Ponds and Power: The Story of the Village **1.40** Ian Rankin's Hidden Edinburgh (AD, SL) **2.40am-3.10** Great British Railway Journeys (AD, SL)

Sky Arts

6.00am Peter and the Wolf **7.30** The Joy of Painting (AD) **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering (AD) **12.00** Wonderland: From JM Barrie to JRR Tolkien **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **2.00** The Alfred Hitchcock Hour (b/w) **3.00** The Eighties (AD) **4.00** Discovering (AD) **5.00** Portrait Artist of the Year 2022 (AD) **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **7.00** Voices of the Valleys **8.00** Discovering: Bruce Willis (AD) **9.00** The Very Best of Peter Sellers. A profile. *See picks of the day* **10.10** Spike Milligan: The Unseen Archive. Recently found film (AD) **11.45** The Directors **12.45am** Garbo: Where Did You Go? **2.40** World War II & Cinema (AD) **3.40** Inside Art **4.05** Sky Arts Book Club **5.05am-6.00** Wonderland

More4

8.55am Heir Hunters **10.00** Four in a Bed **12.40pm** Come Dine with Me (AD) **3.20** Four in a Bed **5.50** Car SOS. A carpenter's 1980 Ford Escort RS2000 (AD) **6.50** Car SOS. Fuzz Townshend and Tim Shaw restore a 1994 Vauxhall Cavalier Turbo (AD) **7.55** Grand Designs. Kevin McCloud meets a couple constructing a black-clad private hideaway in an Essex woodland (4/8) (AD) **9.00** The Reclaimers: Made in Suffolk. Andy and Hayley spend the day at Norwich Castle (4/5) (AD) **10.00** 24 Hours in A&E. Patients who have injured themselves through work or play (5/8) (AD) **11.05** 24 Hours in A&E. Two trauma patients arrive by helicopter on the hospital's new helipad (6/8) (AD) **12.10am** 999: On the Front Line **1.15** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.25am-3.55** A Place in the Sun

Live sport today

St Helens captain Jodie Cunningham

Live Ladies European Tour Golf Sky Sports Golf, 2pm-6
Coverage of day one of the PIF London Championship at Centurion Club in St Albans

Live Women's Super League: St Helens v Wigan Warriors Sky Sports +, Sky Sports Action, Sky Sports Mix, 5pm-7.30
(Kick-off **5.15**). Coverage of the match from BrewDog Stadium

Live LIV Golf TNT Sports 3, 5.30pm-11.30
Coverage of the first day of the 11th round of the season, at Trump National Golf Club Bedminster in New Jersey

Live The Hundred: London Spirit Men v MI London Men Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Cricket, 6pm-9.30
(Start-time **6.30**). Coverage from Lord's Cricket Ground

Live Betfred Super League: St Helens v Hull FC Sky Sports +, Sky Sports Action, 7.30pm-10.15
(Kick-off **8.00**). Coverage comes from BrewDog Stadium

Talking Pictures

6.00am FILM: Cotton Queen (U, 1937) (b/w) **7.40 FILM: Law and Disorder (PG, 1940) 9.10 FILM: The History of Mr Polly (U, 1949)** (b/w) **11.10 FILM: The Second Woman (PG, 1951)** (b/w) **1.00pm** The Adventures of Sir Lancelot (b/w) **1.35 FILM: From Here to Eternity (PG, 1953)** (b/w) **3.55 FILM: Odd Man Out (PG, 1947)** (b/w) **6.20** Strange But True **6.55** The Brothers **8.00** Mark Saber (b/w) **8.30** The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club **9.20 FILM: The Horror of Frankenstein (15, 1970)** Horror **11.20** The Strange Case of Sherlock Holmes and Arthur Conan Doyle **1.10am** 300 Men and a Girl **1.35** Doomwatch **2.40 FILM: Paper Gallows (12, 1950)** (b/w) **4.00am-5.00** Burke's Law (b/w)

Film4

11.00am Miracle on 34th Street (U, 1994) Christmas family drama remake with Richard Attenborough (AD) **1.15pm The Black Swan (PG, 1942)** Swashbuckling adventure starring Tyrone Power **3.00 Sign of the Pagan (U, 1954)** Historical drama starring Jack Palance **4.50 All That Heaven Allows (U, 1955)** Romantic drama starring Jane Wyman and Rock Hudson **6.45 The Electrical Life of Louis Wain (12, 2021)** Biographical drama starring Benedict Cumberbatch (AD) **9.00 Captain Phillips (12, 2013)** Fact-based thriller starring Tom Hanks and Barkhad Abdi **11.40 Dance with a Stranger (15, 1985)** Fact-based drama starring Miranda Richardson. *See film choice* **1.45am-4.00 Our Kind of Traitor (15, 2016)** Spy thriller starring Ewan McGregor and Naomie Harris

BBC3

7.00pm The Catch Up **7.05** Deadly 60. Wildlife in Namibia **7.30** Deadly 60. Africa's big cats **8.00** Sort Your Life Out with Stacey Solomon. Members of a farming family declutter (2/5) (AD) **9.00** Better Date than Never. A group of people take their first steps into the dating scene (1/6) (AD) **9.30** Better Date than Never. Charles gets guidance (2/6) (AD) **10.05** Better Date than Never. Olivia is left speechless (3/6) (AD) **10.35** Better Date than Never. Liv has her wedding planned (4/6) (AD) **11.05** Better Date than Never. Liv hits the beach for a date (5/6) (AD) **11.40** Better Date than Never. Last in the series (AD) **12.10am** Things You Should Have Done **1.40** Tartan Around with Lawrence Chaney **3.45am-4.00** Jobless

ITV2

6.00am Backyard Builds (SL) **6.30** Dress to Impress (AD, SL) **7.30** The Real Housewives of Salt Lake City **8.20** The Real Housewives of Orange County **9.20** The Only Way Is Essex **10.15** Dawson's Creek **11.15** Charmed **12.15pm** Deal or No Deal (AD) **1.15** Supermarket Sweep **2.15** The Floor USA (AD) **3.10** The Only Way Is Essex **4.10** Real Housewives of Salt Lake City **5.00** The Real Housewives of Orange County **6.00** Celebrity Catchphrase (AD) **7.00** The Floor USA (AD) **8.00** The 1% Club (AD) **9.00** Romesh Ranganathan's Parents' Evening **10.00** Changing Ends (AD) **10.35** Family Guy (AD) **11.35** American Dad! (AD) **12.35am** Bob's Burgers (AD) **1.30am-2.25** Deal or No Deal (AD, SL)

ITV3

6.00am George and Mildred **7.05** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **8.10** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **9.10** Agatha Christie's Poirot (AD) **11.30** Heartbeat (AD) **1.35pm** Midsomer Murders (AD) **3.35** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **4.40** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **5.50** Heartbeat. Nostalgic drama (AD) **8.00** Vera. The detective investigates the murder of a homeless young man (2/4) (AD) **10.00** Grantchester. Will and Ellie encounter a brutal murder on a trip to the cinema (3/6) (AD) **11.00** Grantchester. A young man is found dead and stark naked out on the Fens (4/6) (AD) **11.50** Trial & Retribution (6/10) **12.55am** Agatha Christie's Poirot. The disappearance of a cook (AD) **2.00am-2.25** George and Mildred

ITV4

6.00am Magnum, PI (AD) **8.05** Dempsey and Makepeace (AD) **9.05** Boon **10.10** The Professionals (AD) **11.20** Robin of Sherwood **12.25pm** Magnum, PI (AD) **2.30** Dempsey and Makepeace (AD) **3.30** Boon **4.40** The Professionals (AD) **5.45** Minder. Vintage comedy drama (AD) **6.50** River Monsters. The Iliamna Lake monster in Alaska (AD) **7.20** River Monsters. Jeremy Wade heads to Russia's remote Amur River **7.50** Sharpe. The soldier finds himself facing execution for murder **10.00** The Motorbike Show. Henry Cole spends a day training with the Metropolitan Police **11.00** Black Sails. Flint returns to Nassau to retrieve the gold **12.05am** Hell's Kitchen **1.00** Minder (AD, SL) **2.00am-3.00** The Professionals (AD, SL)

U&Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.20** The Bill **8.15** Doctors **9.25** Classic Holby City **10.45** Casualty (AD) **11.45** The Bill **12.50pm** Classic EastEnders **2.00** Neighbours **3.00** Pie in the Sky **4.05** Lovejoy **5.20** As Time Goes By **6.00** Last of the Summer Wine **8.00** The Marlow Murder Club. A revered member of the sailing club is brutally killed (5/6) (AD) **9.00** The Marlow Murder Club. Motives stack up against the suspects, and Kit's killer sends another violent warning (6/6) (AD) **10.00** New Tricks. Investigating a fatal boating accident (7/8) (AD) **11.20** Luther. Killer Henry Madsen wakes from his coma (4/6) (AD) **12.40am** Lovejoy. A hoard of Roman coins **1.50** Sister Boniface Mysteries (AD) **2.50** Hotel Portofino (SL) **4.00am-6.00** Teleshopping

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland
10.40pm The Crime I Can't Forget (r) 11.30 Murder 24/7. The first of a two-part investigation into the 2025 murder of a Hereford man (r) 12.30-1.30 Murder 24/7. Part two (r)

BBC1 Scotland
7.00pm-7.30 River City (r) 12.40am Scotcast (r) 1.10 Alan Carr's Picture Slam (r) 1.55 Weather for the Week Ahead 2.00am-6.00 BBC News

BBC2 N Ireland
11.05pm Fleadh Folk. Concert at the Mandela Hall in Belfast celebrating Ulster's shared musical roots (r) 12.00m't-1.40am FILM: Women Talking (2022) Drama

STV
1.10am-3.00 Shop on TV
3.50am-5.05 Unwind with STV

BBC Scotland
7.00pm Reporting Scotland: News at Seven 7.30 Hidden Lives (r) 8.00 Beechgrove Garden 8.30 Scotland's Greatest Escape (r) 9.00 Granite Harbour 10.00 Scot Squad (r) 10.30 Cumming to the Cabaret! (r) 11.15 Scotcast 11.45pm-12.00 Hannah Laing: Follow the Rave (r)

S4C
6.00am Cyw 10.00 Yr Whws (r) 10.05 Caru Canu a Stori (r) 10.15 Sigldigwt (r) 10.30 Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026 12.00 News 12.05pm Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026. The Osborne Roberts Memorial Prize will be presented on the Pavilion stage 2.00 News 2.05 Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026 7.30 News; Weather 7.50 Eisteddfod Genedlaethol 2026 10.30 Y Babell Lên 2026 11.00pm-12.05am Yr Afon. Last in the series (r)

PBS America

8.00am America the Bountiful **8.35** Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall **9.35** Pirates: Behind the Legends **10.35** Iron Curtain: Living Under Soviet Occupation **11.50** Hitler's Gold **1.00pm** America the Bountiful **1.35** Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall **2.35** Hitler's Gold **3.35** Pirates: Behind the Legends **4.35** Iron Curtain: Living Under Soviet Occupation **5.50** Hitler's Gold **6.50** Conquistadors: The Rise and Fall. The growth of the colonies **7.50** Pirates: Behind the Legends **8.50** Iron Curtain: Living Under Soviet Occupation. How Moscow's grip over the Eastern Bloc remained strong after Stalin's death (3/3) **10.00** Hitler's Gold **11.00** Pirates: Behind the Legends **12.00** Iron Curtain: Living Under Soviet Occupation **1.15am-2.00** America the Bountiful

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Fish Town (r) **8.00** Billions (r) (AD) **10.20** Heated Rivalry (r) (AD) **12.30pm** Homicide: Life on the Street (r) **2.30** Billions (r) (AD) **4.40** Heated Rivalry (r) (AD) **6.50** The Penguin (3/8) (r) (AD) **7.55** The Penguin. Sofia plans for a more hopeful future (4/8) (r) (AD) **9.00** Possession. New supernatural thriller starring Gugu Mbatha-Raw. *See picks of the day* (AD) **10.00** Possession. A lawyer travels challenges an inheritance claim. *See picks of the day* (AD) **11.00** The Five-Star Weekend. A storm descends (7/8) (AD) **11.45** The Five-Star Weekend. Gigi finally opens up as long-buried truths emerge. Last in series (AD) **12.45am** All Her Fault (r) (AD) **1.45** True Detective: Night Country (r) (AD) **3.00** Billions (r) (AD) **5.05am-6.00** Urban Secrets (r)

Sky Docs

6.00am The 2000s (r) **7.00** Discovering: Michelle Pfeiffer (r) (AD) **8.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **9.00** 100 Foot Wave (r) (AD) **10.00** The Comedy Store (r) (AD) **11.05** UFO (r) (AD) **12.00** The Man Who Stole The Scream (r) (AD) **2.00pm FILM: Hitsville — The Making of Motown (12, 2019)** The history of the Motown record label **4.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **5.00** Discovering: Michelle Pfeiffer (r) (AD) **5.55** JFK: Destiny Betrayed (r) **7.00** The Alien Autopsy Scandal. The film is released (r) (AD) **8.00** Ghislaine Maxwell: Epstein's Shadow. Documentary (r) (AD) **11.10** An American Bombing: The Road to April 19th (r) (AD) **1.10am** Telemarketers. In New Jersey (r) (AD) **4.30** Premier League Legends (r) (AD) **5.00am-6.00** Discovering: Maggie Smith (r) (AD)

U&Yesterday

6.10am Abandoned Engineering (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **10.00** Secret Nazi Bases **11.00** Auschwitz: The Nazis and the Final Solution **12.00** Antiques Roadshow **2.00pm** Bangers & Cash (AD) **4.00** Secret Nazi Bases **5.00** Auschwitz: The Nazis and the Final Solution **6.00** Antiques Roadshow **7.00** The Green Planet (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash. Derek picks up a car built in Britain in the '50s for the US market (AD) **9.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. A Volvo 144 (AD) **10.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **11.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **12.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. An MG Metro (AD) **1.00am** Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD) **2.00** Abandoned Engineering (AD) **3.00am-6.10** Teleshopping

MindGames

Tetonor Tricky No 698

198	65	19	220
49	39	273	34
18	360	31	94
240	37	46	186

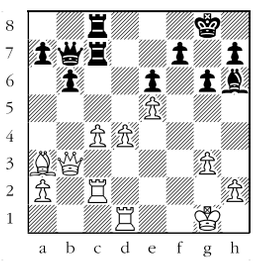
	3	5		6	6		13	15			31				

When complete, the strip below the grid can be split into eight pairs of numbers. Adding the numbers in a pair gives one of the 16 numbers in the grid. Multiplying them gives a different number in the grid. For example, a 4 and 6 in the strip could be paired to make 10 (4+6) and 24 (4x6) in the grid. Enter each sum below the corresponding number in the grid. The blanks in the strip must be deduced, bearing in mind the numbers are listed in ascending order.

The next Tetonor puzzle will appear on Tuesday

For more puzzles, including Mini Sudoku, extra Codeword, Train Tracks and Futoshiki go to page 10

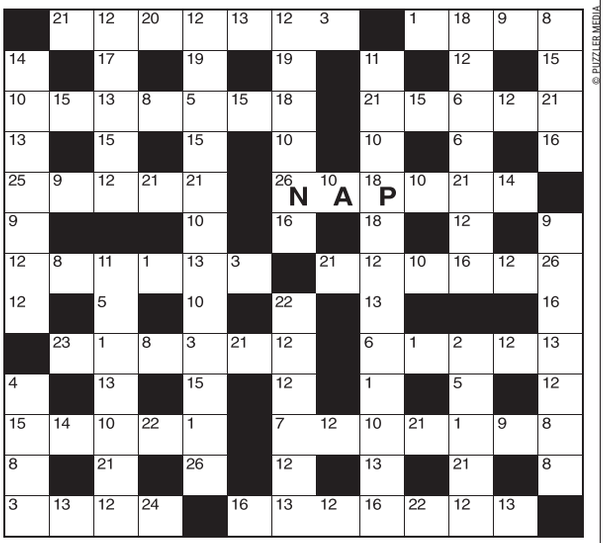
Winning Move



Black to play.
This position is from Pleshkov-Bai, Hong Kong 2026.

It is usually a good thing to have a space advantage. However, when you have a large territory, you need a large army to defend it. If forces (on both sides) become depleted you may discover that your "space advantage" has become an overextended liability. This has happened here. How did Black exploit White's weaknesses?

Codeword No 5912



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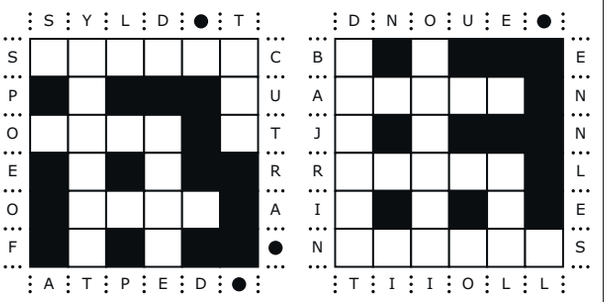
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 A	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 P	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26 N

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

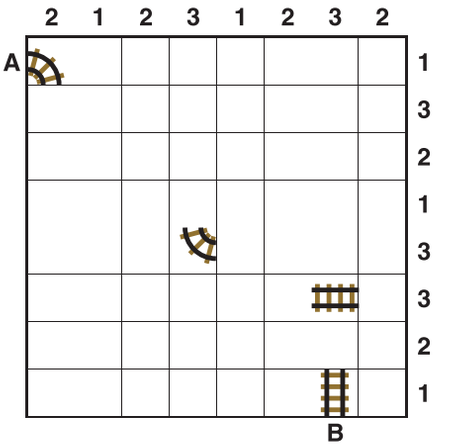
Cluelines **Stuck on Codeword?** To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

Lexica Easy No 9037 Hard No 9038



Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2937



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram® No 2639

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 City featuring in map is awful (4)

— — — —

2 Short fibre unravelling (5)

— — — — —

3 Wolf's big mistake? (6)

— — — — — —

4 Discussion about small herb (7)

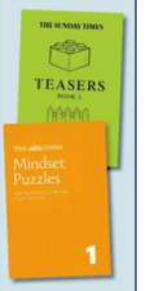
— — — — — — —

5 US politician concerning landlord (10)

— — — — — — — — — —

A	A	A	B	B	C	E	E
E	E	F	H	I	I	I	L
L	L	N	O	P	P	P	R
R	R	R	S	S	U	W	Y

Challenge your mind with these fiendish word and number puzzles



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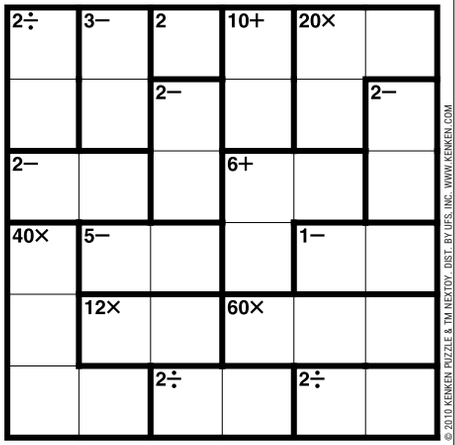
Try Wordhunt and Picle, our new online Quick Play puzzles at thetimes.com/puzzles and on the Live app

KenKen Difficult No 6904



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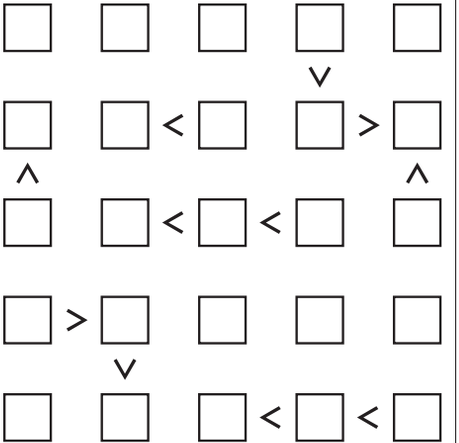
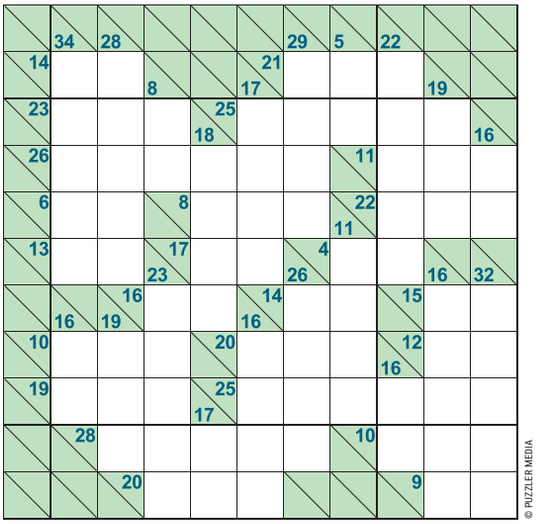
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 5452



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 4411



Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

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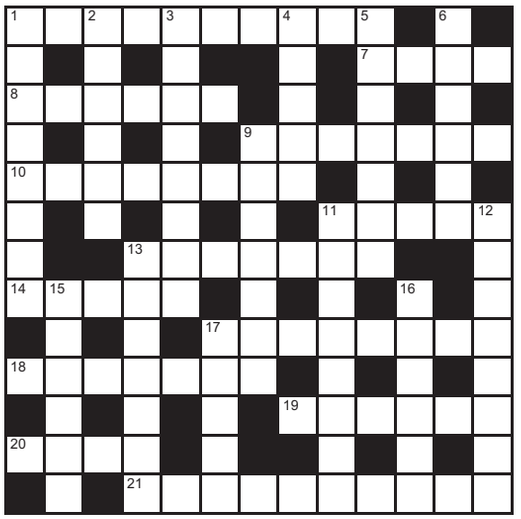
MindGames

times2 Crossword No 10,228



Across

1 Northeast English city (10)
7 Cincinnati's US state (4)
8 Of greatest age (6)
9 Deceleration (7)
10 Shame (8)
11 Internet connection device (5)
13 As a replacement (7)
14 Ring, call (5)
17 Complete set of letters (8)
18 Wretched, base (7)
19 Take as read (6)
20 Detective's lead (4)
21 Equatorial habitat (10)

Down

1 White-petalled flower (8)
2 Advocate of nakedness (6)
3 Preserve (a right, law etc) so as to confer respect (8)
4 Generous in amount (5)
5 Plant with conspicuous red stems over winter (7)
6 Husband-to-be (6)
9 Coal receptacle (7)
11 Brash masculine pride (8)
12 Be cruel or negligent to; *star item* (*anagram*) (8)
13 New arrival (7)
15 Negotiate over price (6)
16 Slow to understand (6)
17 Evidence proving absence from a crime scene (5)

Solution to Crossword 10,227

	D	A	S	T	A	R	D	L	Y		B	
	O		A		Y		I		A	R	I	D
G	U	I	N	N	E	S	S		R		T	
	B		D				S	E	D	A	T	E
C	L	O	D		T		O			E		
	E		U	P	H	O	L	S	T	E	R	Y
			N		E		V		E			
U	N	D	E	R	S	T	E	E	R		A	
	E				A		D		M	U	S	K
G	A	T	E	A	U				I		C	
	T		A		R	E	P	E	N	T	E	D
M	E	S	S		U		I		A		N	
	N		T	E	S	T	P	I	L	O	T	

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

I am a big believer that if you have a one-suited hand and an opponent pre-empts, you bid your suit — at some level. Don't make a take-out double, or bad things may happen.

Take this deal from England v Portugal in the Open series at the 57th European Bridge National Teams Championships in Riga. It appears to be a dullish 4♠, making ten tricks when declarer is unwilling to risk the club finesse.

Not against Tom Paske (West) and David Gold (East) it wasn't. Paske and Gold are best friends of many years, recently starting a bridge partnership. When not playing bridge or attending to their respective young families, Paske (who lives in Vienna) loves to go bouldering, while Gold (who lives in Watford), is a food influencer of repute (search for *Eat like Gold*).

For me, South bids 3♠ over 3♦. If he thinks he's a tad good, he bids 4♠. Double is no middle route — because of what may (and indeed did) happen.

Paske doubled 5♠ to increase the penalty and led a top heart (playing ace for attitude, king for count, leading the king v Four-level contracts and above). Now what?

It is sooo tempting to switch to his singleton diamond. Partner wins the ace, gives him a ruff and 5♠ doubled is going two down.

Paske wisely resisted. For if he switches to that diamond (perhaps after cashing a second top heart), declarer can beat East's queen of diamonds with the ace, draw trumps then lead a club to the queen (a necessary risk when you're in Five), then shed his jack of diamond on the ace of clubs — 11 tricks made.

Only a club switch works, severing communications. Declarer had to risk the finesse then try to cash the ace (as he couldn't get back to dummy). East rudely ruffed and that was one down. Pasktastic.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Dealer: East, Vulnerability: East-West

Teams | Advanced

	♠64 ♥QJ ♦1064 ♣AQJ1093	
♠J83 ♥AK42 ♦3 ♣K8754	N W E S	♠97 ♥873 ♦KQ98752 ♣6
	♠AKQ1052 ♥10965 ♦AJ ♣2	

S	W(Paske)	N	E(Gold)
			3♦(1)
Dbl(2)	Pass	5♣(3)	Pass
5♠(4)	Dbl(5)	End	

(1) The unfavourable vulnerability is a concern but such bids do make life difficult. Take the odd -800 v a non-vulnerable game on the chin (probably, though, it'll be a pair of -800s — they'll open 3♦ next door too).
(2) Unwise. Don't double a pre-empt holding a one-suiter — just bid the suit (at whatever level you deem appropriate, in this case a heavy-ish 3♠).
(3) Placing partner with the classic 441♦4 shape, 5♣ will play beautifully.
(4) "Well, here's another nice mess you've gotten me into" (except that South got himself into it).
(5) Make 'em pay. If 5♠ is two down, the double will net four imps as opposed to the pass (comparing with 4♠ undoubled one down at the other table)

Contract: 5♠ Dbled, Opening Lead: ♥K

Brain Trainer

EASY 14	DOUBLE IT	+ 12	÷ 10	x 4	+ 17	÷ 3	x 6	– 29	DOUBLE IT	ANSWER
MEDIUM 32	÷ 4	+ 42	50% OF IT	÷ 5	x 7	x 3	+ 3	÷ 9	TIMES ITSELF	ANSWER
HARDER 6	CUBE IT	– 57	÷ 3	x 4	+ 50% OF IT	– 6	÷ 6	+ 75% OF IT	x 9	ANSWER

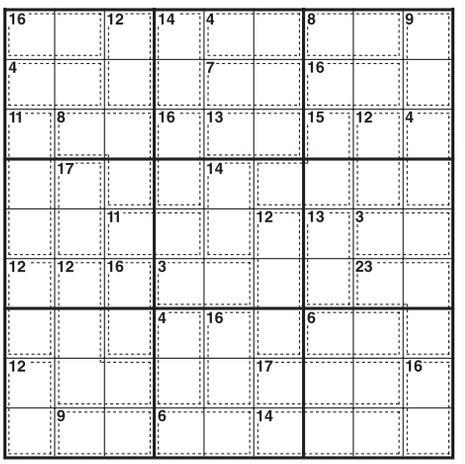
Polygon

From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives.
How you rate 15 words, average; 20, good; 24, very good; 28, excellent

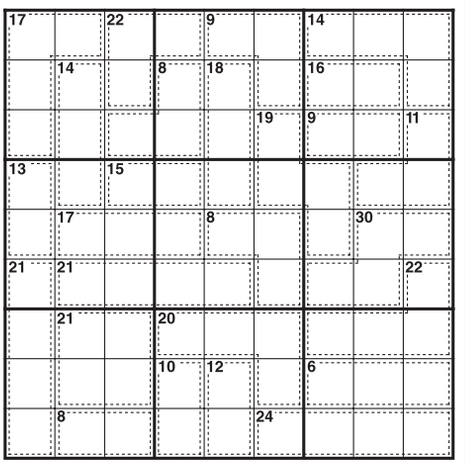
Yesterday's answers

airy, arris, artist, **artistry**, artsy, arty, astir, rarity, rats, ratty, sari, satyr, sitar, stair, star, starry, start, stir, strait, stray, stria, tarry, tart, tarty, trait, tray, tryst, tsar

Killer Gentle No 10,862



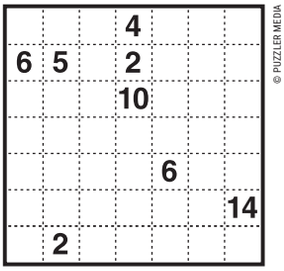
Killer Tough No 10,863



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Cell Blocks No 5795



Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

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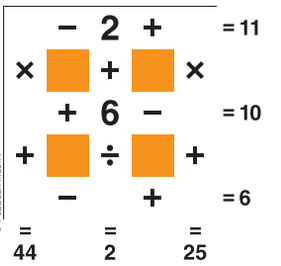
Set Square No 4414



Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

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Solutions

Quick Cryptic 3372

G	I	R	A			M
O	R	A	N	G	E	
U	C	P		H		S
R	E	N	O		O	V
S	R		S	R		O
C	O	M	P	L	E	T
M		O		E		S
D	E	A	R		I	N
		A		M	E	
S	O	F	T	S	P	O
B	E	A		T		E
B	O	R	D	E	R	
E			T		E	

Codeword 5911

V	I	B	R	A	N	T		S	T	A	K	E
E		A		P		Y		O		Q		X
N	O	T	C	H		P	E	R	J	U	R	E
I		O		O		I		T		A		R
S	U	N	D	R	E	S	S		S	T	E	T
O				I		T		B		I		
N	U	D	I	S	M		C	R	O	C	U	S
	E		M		R		O					I
S	O	B	A		F	A	R	C	I	C	A	L
I		A		W		G		C		R		V
E	X	C	E	R	P	T		O	Z	O	N	E
V		L		I		A		L		S		R
E	J	E	C	T		G	A	I	N	S	A	Y

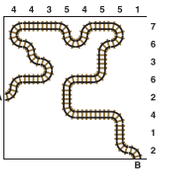
Kakuro 4410

7	1			4	9		4	1
9	8	2		1	3		9	3	5
	9	3	4	2	1	5	8	6	7
	5	8		2	7		4	8
	9	4	7			3	6	2	9
2	7	1	5			8	7	9	
5	8		9	8		1	4		
3	5	9	6	7	2	4	8	1	
1	2	8		9	3		9	6	1
1	2			2	1			9	6

Sudoku 17,001

3	8	9	4	6	2	7	1	5
2	6	1	7	8	5	4	9	3
7	4	5	3	1	9	6	8	2
1	2	6	5	3	7	8	4	9
9	5	7	8	2	4	3	6	1
8	3	4	6	9	1	5	2	7
6	7	2	9	5	8	1	3	4
4	1	3	2	7	6	9	5	8
5	9	8	1	4	3	2	7	6

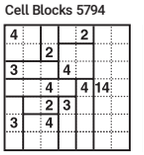
Train Tracks 2936



Sudoku 17,002

5	7	4	3	8	9	6	1	2
6	1	2	7	5	4	9	3	8
8	3	9	2	6	1	7	4	5
1	6	3	5	4	8	2	9	7
9	5	8	1	2	7	4	6	3
2	4	7	6	9	3	5	8	1
7	9	6	8	3	2	1	5	4
4	8	1	9	7	5	3	2	6
3	2	5	4	1	6	8	7	9

Cell Blocks 5794



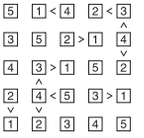
Set Square 4413

Lexica 9035

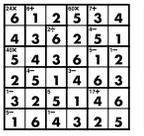
Sudoku 17,003

6	1	4	3	5	2	7	8	9
9	7	3	6	8	4	1	5	2
8	5	2	7	9	1	4	6	3
3	9	6	1	7	5	2	4	8
1	8	7	4	2	6	9	3	5
2	4	5	8	3	9	6	7	1
4	2	8	9	6	3	5	1	7
7	6	9	5	1	8	3	2	4
5	3	1	2	4	7	8	9	6

Futoshiki 5451



KenKen 6903



Lexica 9036

Killer 10,860

7	3	9	8	5	2	6	4	1
1	5	8	4	6	9	2	7	3
6	2	4	3	1	7	5	8	9
5	4	2	6	7	1	9	3	8
8	9	6	2	4	3	7	1	5
3	1	7	9	8	5	4	2	6
2	7	5	1	3	6	8	9	4
4	6	3	7	9	8	1	5	2
9	8	1	5	2	4	3	6	7

Killer 10,861

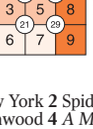
9	1	7	8	5	4	3	6	2
3	8	4	6	9	2	7	5	1
6	2	5	1	3	7	4	9	8
4	9	8	5	7	3	1	2	6
1	5	6	2	4	8	9	3	7
2	7	3	9	6	1	8	4	5
7	3	2	4	1	6	5	8	9
8	4	9	7	2	5	6	1	3
5	6	1	3	8	9	2	7	4

Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram
1 Palm
2 Olive
3 Crude
4 Vegetable
5 Essential

Cryptic Quintagram
1 Pisa
2 Brief
3 Howler
4 Parsley
5 Republican

Sakuro 4813



Brain Trainer
Easy 74
Medium 144
Harder 819

Word watch

Graham (c) A category of Scottish mountain (*Chambers*)
Creatic (c) Pertaining to meat (*Collins*) **Corbeille** (c) An elegant basket of flowers or fruit (*OED*)

Chess — Winning Move

1 ... Rxc4! is a destructive breakthrough. After 2 Rxc4 Rxc4 White's position is a disaster as 3 Qxc4 is impossible on account of 3 ... Be3+ 4 Kf1 Qf3+ 5 Ke1 Qf2 mate. After 2 ... Rxc4 White is a pawn down and the black forces are running riot. White won't survive long

Quiz

1 New York **2** Spider **3** Kenwood **4** *A Midsummer Night's Dream* **5** Aircraft **6** Vatican City **7** Duke of Wellington **8** Madness **9** Dior **10** Charles II **11** Luke Combs **12** *Riot Women* **13** Lawren Harris **14** Idi Amin **15** Eden Park

THE TIMES

06.08.26

MindGames

For extra puzzles
See page 10

Word watch
David Parfitt

Graham
a An early type of telephone
b An inexperienced author
c A category of Scottish mountain

Creatic
a Characterised by originality
b Obscure in meaning
c Pertaining to meat

Corbeille
a A trouser press
b A bugle call sounded at bedtime
c An elegant basket of flowers

Answers on page 15

Sudoku

Mild No 17,004

	7		9			8		
3	4				5	1		
				3	8	7	4	5
5		1	3			4	7	
4						6		
					4			8
	9				3			
		4					1	2
				6	7		8	

Fiendish No 17,005

			8					
			2		1	4	9	
				3			5	1
6	7							
		9		8		3		
	1							7
	3			4			7	5
	4	1				9		3
		2			7	6	4	

Super fiendish No 17,006

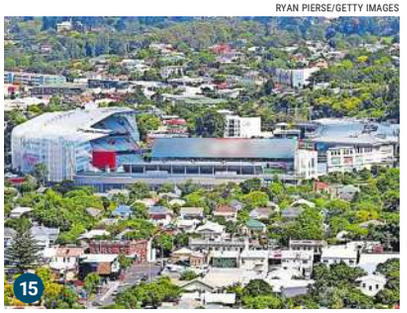
			4		3			
	8		2		3		4	
								1
6			1		5			
		7	9	2	5	1		
		9		6				7
7								
	9		1		4		2	
		8		9				

© PUZZLER MEDIA

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

RYAN PIERSE/GETTY IMAGES



1 Johan de Meij's second symphony, *The Big Apple*, is an ode to which US city?

2 In *The Beano*, what sort of arachnid is Dennis the Menace's pet Dasher?

3 Which British kitchen appliance manufacturer is named after the engineer Kenneth Wood?

4 The mischievous fairy Puck offers to "make amends" in the epilogue of which Shakespeare comedy?

5 "Wheel-well stowaways" take fatal risks to travel by what means?

6 Which tiny country is Europe's only theocracy?

7 In 1817, a grateful nation presented the Hampshire estate Stratfield Saye to which duke?

8 *Take It or Leave It* is a 1981 film about the formation of which London ska and pop band?

9 Which French fashion house named the Caro bag after its founder's sister Catherine?

10 Louise de Kérouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth (1649-1734) was a French mistress of which king?

11 Which US country music star had a 2023 hit with his cover of Tracy Chapman's *Fast Car*?

12 The Spectator said which 2025 Sally Wainwright TV drama "sums up everything wrong with the BBC"?

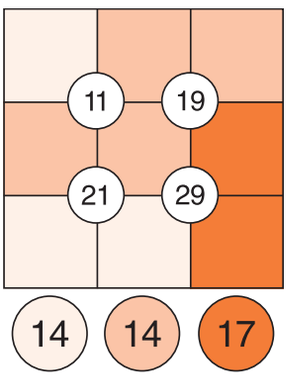
13 Which founding member of Canada's Group of Seven painted *North Shore, Lake Superior* (1926)?

14 The Ugandan boxer Aziz Abdul is the grandson of which late dictator?

15 Which rugby and cricket venue in New Zealand is pictured?

Answers on page 15

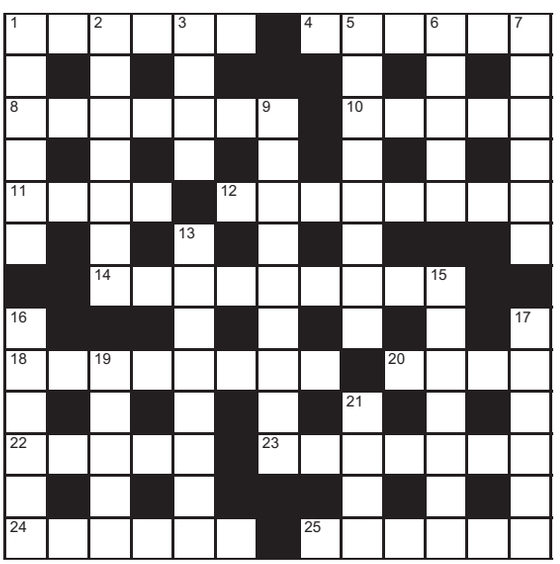
Sakuro
No 4813



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic
No 3373 by Juji



Across
1 Secured mobile in deal (6)
4 Healthcare worker they'd said regularly gets involved in back operation (6)
8 Finally remedy hole in father's nightwear (7)
10 Renowned editor finishing new books (5)
11 Bird left Noah's vessel (4)
12 Ciphers gent uncovered beside underground chambers (8)
14 Spotted dog close to field barking at animal (9)
18 Dispatched parts competently, without thinking (8)
20 Nobleman appointed to host king (4)
22 Public square is place jazzman used now and again (5)
23 Five soldiers in gamble split up (7)
24 Clearly describe part of fish seen in Scottish river (6)
25 Ruffled young mare carrying queen (6)

Down
1 Write about boxer from mountainous land (6)
2 Hurt in martial art, almost holding on (7)
3 Name of woman rising in the morning with me (4)
5 Worker rejected untrustworthy person's support (8)
6 Lifting, say, is exercise (3-2)
7 On vacation, ordered food of dubious nature (6)
9 Some Victorians and all Edwardians in lightweight footwear (9)
13 Insect hidden in ordinary fruit (8)
15 Dull Renault hybrid (7)
16 Lightly hit adept shot to gain lead in polo (6)
17 Just married before end of financial year (6)
19 Blemish on female's neck covering (5)
21 Finished deliveries (4)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

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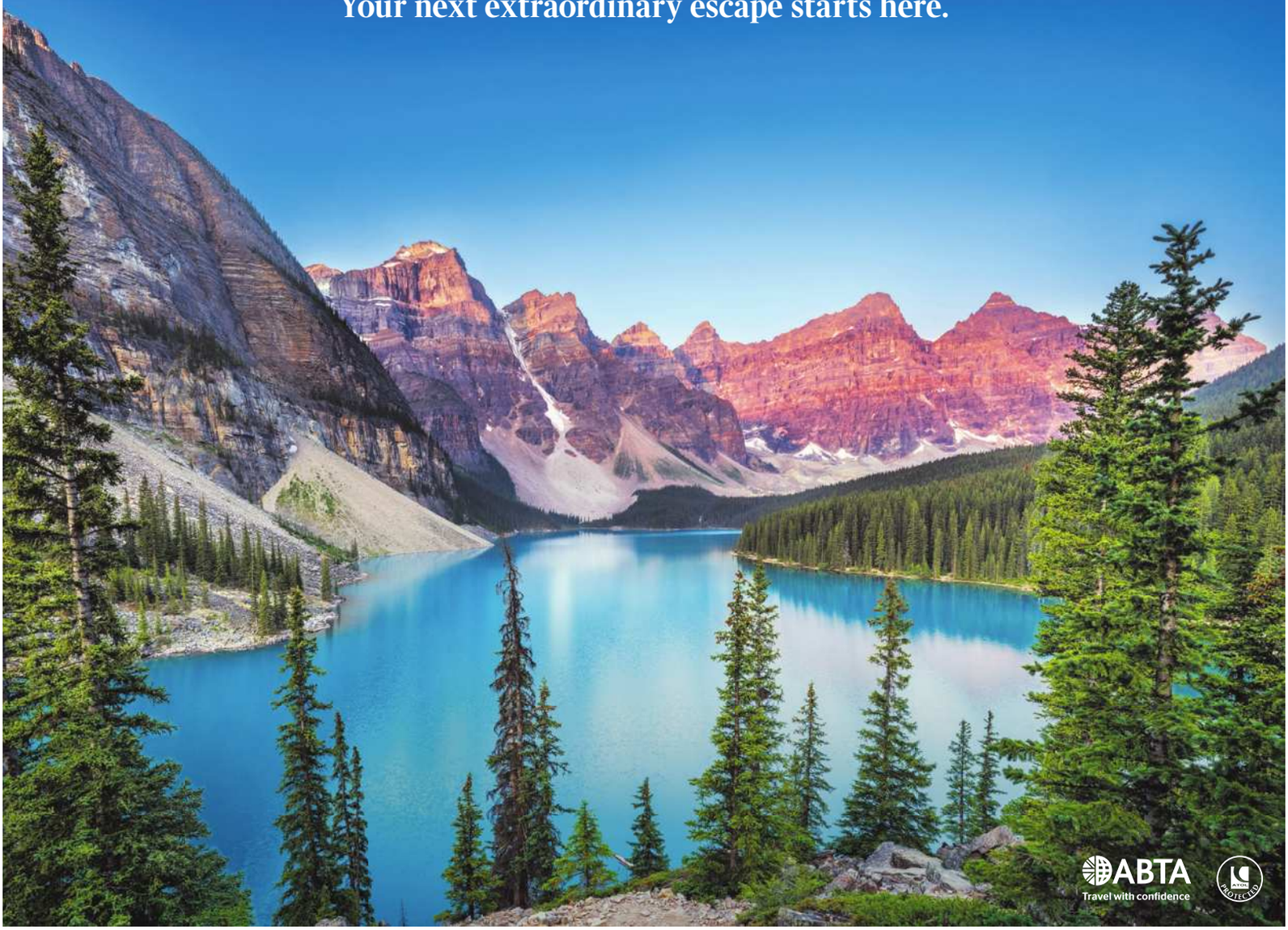

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Ephesus & Greek Islands

OCEAN

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Arrive in Athens and and transfer to the hotel, then enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

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Uncover the wonders of Athens and delve into the marvels of the Acropolis and the Parthenon.

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Discover Rhodes, the oldest inhabited medieval city in Europe.

Day 7 – Kos
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Day 8 – Amorgos
Visit the enchanting Cycladic Island of Amorgos and see the Panagia Hozoviotissa Monastery.

Day 9 – Poros
Wander the enchanting streets of Poros or visit the magnificent theatre in Epidaurus.

Day 10 – Sounion
Marvel at breathtaking views of the Aegean Sea and Saronic Gulf at the Temple of Poseidon.

Day 11 – Return home
Say goodbye and start the journey home.

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August 2026 to December 2028

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Starting in vibrant Osaka, you'll explore Japan's main island, Honshu, ending up amongst the bright lights and sky-scraping towers of capital Tokyo. En route, you'll see the very best of Japan: ancient history in Kyoto and Nara, the more recent past in Hiroshima, the beauty of the Japanese Alps where you'll see snow monkeys and explore rural towns, gaze on the perfect cone of Mount Fuji and more. Expect plenty of traditional Japanese experiences, from a tea ceremony to washi paper making and, depending on your departure date, a sumo wrestling tournament.

When booking this tour with The Times Travel Offers, you will get an exclusive complimentary pre-tour extension including an extra hotel night with breakfast - make sure to quote TIMES-ON when booking.

Price includes

- International flights and current taxes
- Domestic transportation, including bullet train to Kyoto
- All accommodation throughout the tour
- 16 breakfasts, 14 lunches and 15 dinners
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What we love

The all-encompassing itinerary with an exceptional range of authentic inclusions, from delicious local cuisine to immersive experiences. You will also experience an exclusive complimentary pre-tour extension when booking through Times Travel Offers.

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January 2027 to February 2028

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Our nine day escorted tour of the Canadian Rockies is truly magical - seeing the snow and ice bringing this spectacular landscape to life. Our escorted tour starts in Calgary, and heads straight to the UNESCO listed Banff National Park. Here the Banff Gondola cable car ride takes you to the top of Sulphur Mountain for unrivalled views of Banff - a sight that will astound and delight. You'll also be taken on a horse-drawn sleigh ride followed by a relaxing visit to Banff's natural hot springs. The adventure continues with a journey to Jasper National Park followed by a trip to the picture-perfect Lake Louise - a sight made all the more perfect by our hotel for that part of the trip - staying at the famous Fairmount Chateau Lake Louise Hotel, which is situated right on the shore of the lake itself.

Price includes

- Return flights from London plus overseas transportation
- Seven nights in great quality hotels plus one night in flight
- Stay in the Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise
- Five breakfasts and welcome drink
- Visit Banff National Park tour
- Lake Louise fire-pit drinks
- Jasper National Park tour
- Enjoy horse-drawn sleigh ride
- Relax in Banff 's hot springs
- Services of a Travelsphere holiday director

"A holiday of a lifetime. We spent a week in the Winter Wonderland Rockies in Canada landing and departing from Calgary. Visiting three fantastic but different areas, Banff, Jasper and Lake Louise, we were awestruck with the scenery, including frozen lakes and waterfalls, glaciers and the mountains themselves.
Carole Taylor

★ Trustpilot

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Experience the timeless charm of Lake Garda, where shimmering waters, elegant lakeside towns and rolling vineyards set the scene for a relaxing Italian escape. Stay at the contemporary four-star Aqualux Hotel Spa Suite & Bardolino, just moments from the lake in one of Garda's most picturesque resorts. Wander Bardolino's colourful waterfront, sample local wines, take a boat to the medieval streets of Sirmione or simply soak up the spectacular mountain scenery. With daily breakfast, a welcome bottle of Prosecco and fresh fruit on arrival, this is a sophisticated lakeside retreat that perfectly balances relaxation with the best of northern Italy.

Price includes

- Return flights from various UK airports
- Stay five nights at the four-star Aqualux Hotel Spa Suite & Bardolino
- Daily breakfast
- One bottle of Prosecco wine and fruit platter in room on arrival

Other dates available

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Price includes

- Return flights from various UK airports
- Stay seven nights at the four-star The Views Baía (Adults Only)
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Italian cities, the Swiss Alps
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Price includes

- Flights from London to Milan and Rome to London
- Three-night stay in Milan at a four-star hotel on bed and breakfast basis
- Swiss Alps and St. Moritz full-day tour with Bernina Red Train experience
- Train journey from Milan to Rome
- One-night stay in Rome at a four-star hotel on bed & breakfast basis
- Seven-night full board cruise onboard Enchanted Princess
- All meals and onboard entertainment
- All transfers included

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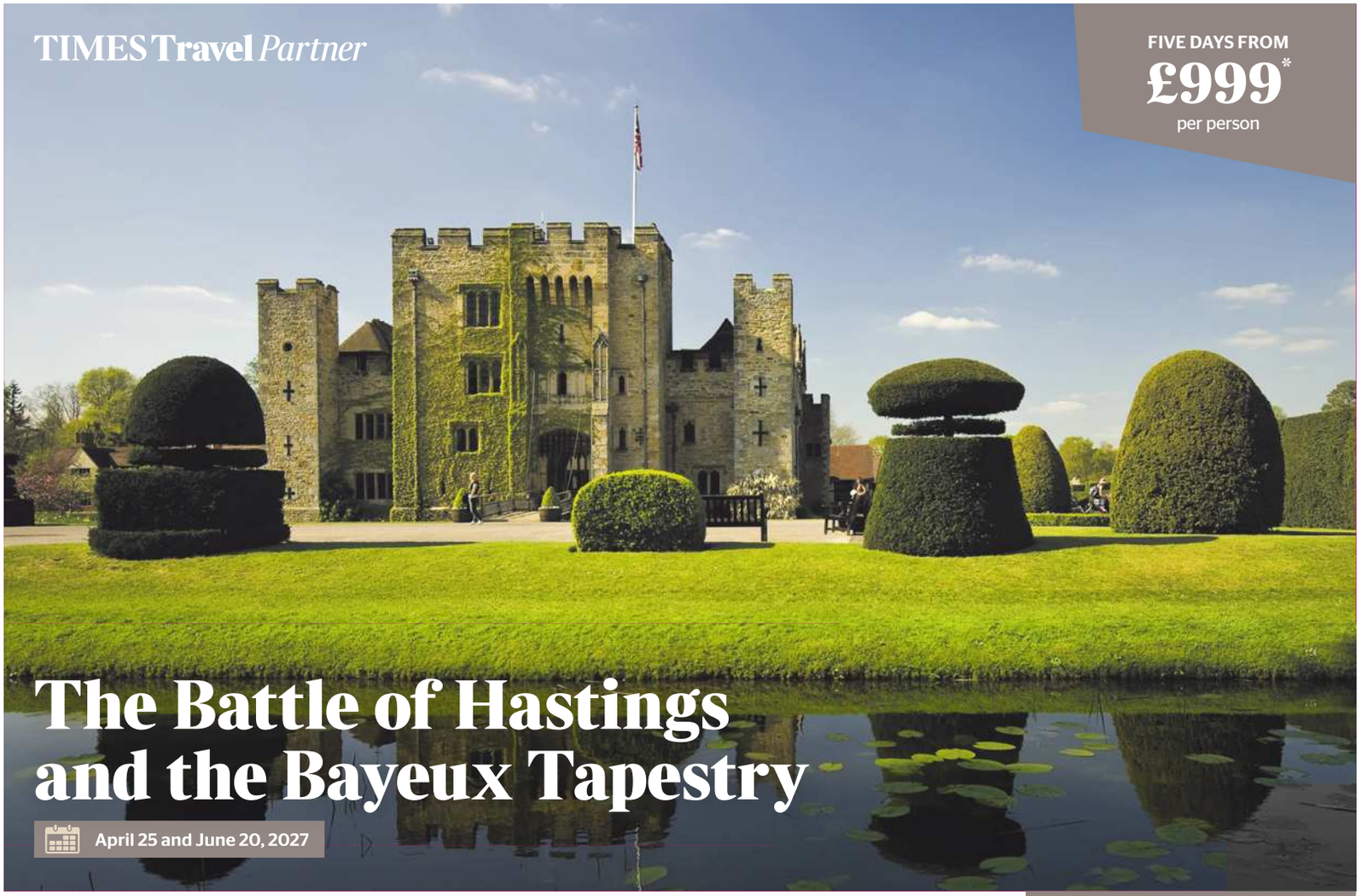
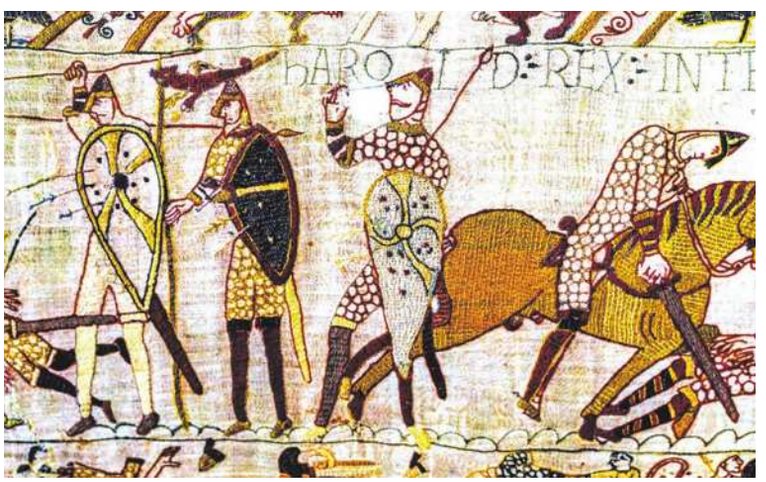


The Battle of Hastings and the Bayeux Tapestry

April 25 and June 20, 2027

Step back into the world of medieval England on this fascinating tour, combining the rare opportunity to see the iconic Bayeux Tapestry on British soil with visits to the historic castles and battlefields that shaped the nation's history.

Travel back to 1066 on this exciting tour, featuring the once-in-a-lifetime chance to see the Bayeux Tapestry on British soil as it leaves Normandy for the first time in nearly a thousand years. On loan for the highly anticipated exhibition at the British Museum, this remarkable artefact offers a true glimpse into the Norman conquest of England, with scenes brought to life in intricate detail. We also discover the very spots chronicled in the tapestry, including the ancient battlefield of the Battle of Hastings and Battle Abbey, where William the Conqueror secured his victory and altered the course of English history thereafter. Visits to Bodiam Castle, Hever Castle and Penshurst Place continue to paint the picture of medieval England on this captivating exploration of Kent and East Sussex.



Price includes

- Four nights at the Donnington Manor, Sevenoaks with dinner and breakfast
- Coach transfers to and from your excursions
- Welcome drink
- After-dinner tea and coffee at the hotel
- Any additional meals or refreshments as listed in the itinerary
- Porterage
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Malaysia is a country of two halves. To the east is the island of Borneo with orangutans, jungles and rivers. To the west is the Malaysian Peninsula with a blend of cultures, religion, colonial history and modern flair. Discover the highlights of both, with a chance to spot orangutans and pygmy elephants in Borneo, before diving into culture in Kuala Lumpur, Malacca and Georgetown. We finish on the tropical beaches of Langkawi island – a scenic finale to this adventure of contrasts.

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Your itinerary

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What's included

- Seven nights in hotels, two nights in a beach resort and four night in a resort
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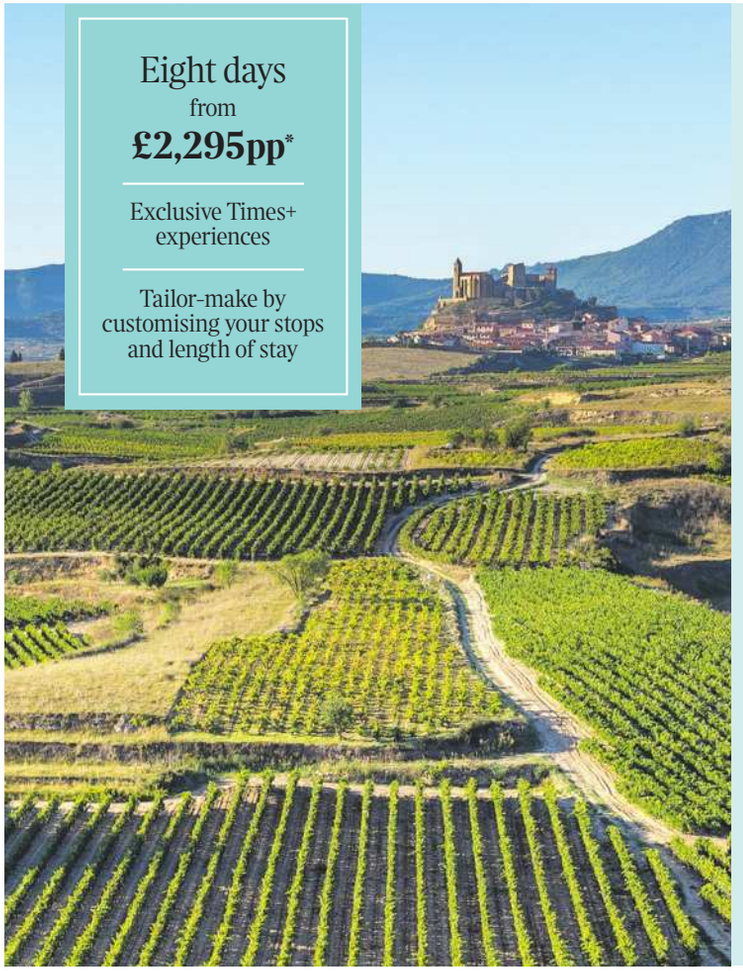

Eight days
from
£2,295pp*

Exclusive Times+ experiences

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SELF-GUIDED FLY-DRIVE

The castles and vineyards of northern Spain

August to October 2026

This Cox & Kings tour offers an immersive, self-drive journey through the region's striking landscapes and renowned culinary culture. Explore centuries-old wine regions in La Rioja, dine at a Michelin-starred restaurant and visit the Vivanco Museum of Wine Culture. The trip winds through historic hilltop towns like Olite, where you'll overnight in a converted 15th-century fortress. The journey concludes in the Basque Country with a pintxos food tour in coastal San Sebastian. Times+ members receive free add-on experiences: enjoy a private walking tour of Olite to explore one of Spain's best-preserved medieval towns, and a private tour of Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum.

Your itinerary

Madrid, Spain – Ribera del Duero – La Rioja (three nights) – Olite (overnight) – Hondarribia (overnight) – San Sebastian (overnight) – Bilbao (overnight)

For more information,
visit thetimes.com/th-northernspain

What's included

- Return international flights
- Four- and five-star hotel accommodation
- Six breakfasts and three lunches
- Car hire for the duration of the tour
- Local guides and entrance fees where applicable
- Local English-speaking support (if required)
- **Times+ member exclusives:** private walking tour of Olite and private tour of Bilbao's Guggenheim Museum, plus save £100^
  Visit **timesplus.com/northernspain** for your unique code

RAIL JOURNEY WITH FLIGHTS

Andalusia by rail

August to October 2026

Experience the rich cultural tapestry of southern Spain on an effortless rail journey through Andalusia. Travelling by high-speed AVE train, you will explore the region's three historic gems: Seville, the vibrant capital; Cordoba, famed for its magnificent Mezquita; and Granada, guardian of the legendary Alhambra. The experience is complemented by stays in four-star hotels or atmospheric, historic Hospes properties, handpicked by Cox & Kings. Plus, Times+ members receive free add-on experiences. Enjoy a boutique olive oil tasting, a guided tour of Alhambra Palace, and a relaxing visit to the hammam baths, including a massage.

Your itinerary

Seville, Spain (two nights) – Cordoba (two nights) – Granada (two nights)

For more information,
visit thetimes.com/th-andalusiabyrail

What's included

- Return international flights
- Four-star hotel accommodation with breakfast
- Private chauffeur-driven vehicle overseas transfers
- Local guides and entrance fees where applicable
- Local English speaking support (if required)
- **Times+ member exclusives:** private olive oil tasting, private Alhambra Palace tour and Hamman Bath visit with massage, plus save £100^
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Seven days
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Terms and conditions apply. *Prices shown are per person, based on two adults sharing, correct as of June 9, 2026 and subject to change and availability. The 'Castles and Vineyards of Northern Spain' offer based on October 26, 2026 and doesn't include locally payable parking fees (estimated at £150). The 'Andalucia by Rail' offer based on October 26, 2026 and includes all non optional taxes/fees/charges known at time of publication. ^£100 off Times+ offer applicable to each Times Holidays booking made by December 31, 2026 with a minimum spend of £2,000 when quoting your unique Times+ code. Visit thetimes.com/timesplus for full terms and conditions. Offers and bookings are subject to availability, see supplier website for full T&C's. These flight-inclusive holidays are sold and payments accepted by Times Holidays as an agent Cox and Kings Ltd, ATOL 2844 and financially protected by the ATOL scheme. An ATOL Certificate will be issued on payment. For full booking conditions, visit thetimes.com/holidays/terms-and-conditions. For more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to caa.co.uk.

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